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The Nation

June 1, 1985 $1.25; U.K. 65p

EDITORIAL

MONOPOLIZING THE NEWS

A week ago, the Supreme Court decided that we owe Gerald Ford's publisher $12,500 because, in a story on his memoirs, we quoted 300 of his words. History will decide how well the decision comports with the values of the Constitution. We will analyze its potential impact on the media in an upcoming issue. Nevertheless, it seems clear that Harper & Row and *Reader's Digest*'s "victory" is one from which the publishing industry will not soon recover. As Justice William Brennan wrote in his dissent, "The Court's exceedingly narrow approach to fair use permits Harper & Row to monopolize information." Quoting Justice Louis Brandeis, he said that Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's holding effects "an important extension of property rights and a corresponding curtailment in the free use of knowledge and of ideas."

To impede the free flow of information under the guise of copyright protection cannot be a good thing for publishers, writers or readers. To permit public officials like former President Ford to withhold public information for private profit undermines the public's right to know and dangerously commercializes the political process. Justice O'Connor's opinion enshrines publishers' subsidiary-rights deals and downgrades journalists' duty to report the news (a term she seemed to find vaguely distasteful).

The decision is the latest in a series of obstacles the courts have placed in the way of the free flow of ideas, and in many ways it is the most troubling. The suit was brought by publishers who claim to care about the First Amendment, but they have displayed a greater concern for property rights. The challenge now is to overcome this new private-sector censorship, if not through litigation then through legislation, and to resist with redoubled determination all who would further undermine our open society.

REMEMBER EL SALVADOR?
Alexander Cockburn

RUSSIA & THE THIRD WORLD
Jerry Hough

UNFRIENDLY SKIES
Bill Blum
Gina Lobaco

'CAPTAIN MAXIMUS'
Terrence Rafferty

PHILIP ROTH: AN INTERVIEW
Ian Hamilton

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Paul Berman

ON THE HILL

ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST

ANDREW KOPKIND

West Hollywood is no place like home. The tiny enclave in the vast Los Angeles basin inverts the demographics, politics and poetics of what Americans consider normal urban life. It stands the traditional population pyramid on its head: only about 6 percent of its 36,000 residents are under 18 years of age, and a quarter are over 60. Its 1.9 square miles, gerrymandered over the years into the shape of a long-barreled revolver, contain hardly an inch of undeveloped land; even without many conspicuous high-rises, it has the densest population of any city west of the Mississippi. In a region with burgeoning Hispanic, Asian and black communities, it has few members of those ethnic varieties; instead, there are several thousand recent Soviet immigrants huddled into a Little Muscovy on the tip of the cartographic gun barrel, where L.A.'s Jews from an earlier immigration had built a sunny ghetto. It is uncommonly rich in public revenues: from taxes on high-priced hotel rooms, on sales of luxury items in trendy shops and showrooms and on prime real estate. But two startling statistics have made most of the difference in West Hollywood's recent urban evolution. Almost 90 percent of the residents rent their dwellings, and more than a third of the city is gay.

Sex and housing are unlikely issues to combine as a fundament for civic action, but without them there would be nothing civic about West Hollywood at all. Until last year, the enclave was an unincorporated islet surrounded by Beverly Hills to the west, Los Angeles in the other directions. Scores of internal suburbs had seized

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LETTERS.

We have received scores of letters responding to Michael Massing's April 6 article, "Hard Questions on Nicaragua," and regret that we cannot print them all. With the following selection, we bring the exchange to a close.
—The Editors

BORED IN THE U.S.A.: LEFT'S DEBATE BEHIND THE TIMES

New York City
The question Michael Massing raises about Nicaragua—Is it possible to criticize a revolution without becoming its enemy?—has challenged thinkers on the left since 1917. The power struggles in the Soviet Union, the Stalin years, the gulags and the invasion of Hungary posed a far more serious dilemma for Communists all over the world than Nicaragua creates for the American left. Some of the conclusions from this older debate have relevance to the current discussion about the Sandinistas.

Since the 1930s, Communists all over the world have been torn between their faith in the U.S.S.R. as a beacon of socialism (and as the ultimate guarantor of their own survival) and their increasing doubts about elements of Soviet policy and conduct. The invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 turned the doubts to open criticism and some Western Communist parties officially distanced themselves from Moscow.

What is significant here is not some parallel between the gulags and the relocation of the Miskito Indians, but that the break with the U.S.S.R. in the 1960s was a turning point in the cultural and ideological evolution of the European left. It marked a rejection not just of human rights abuses but of the model of revolution that resolves the dialectic between classes through a centralized authoritarian state.

Enormous changes in Western society by the 1960s made the Soviet model obsolete. Complex class structures, high levels of individual demand, international interdependence, all meant that the state could no longer be defined as "the executive committee of the bourgeoisie." Looking critically at other revolutionary experiences helped European leftists as they began to formulate a new concept of democratic revolution.

In light of these developments, the recent discussion in *The Nation* strikes me as outdated. Events in Nicaragua are part of the process I described above. The Sandinistas are coping with the complexities of the 1980s, attempting to reconcile Marxism and Catholicism, respecting class differences, distinguishing between the party and the state and seeking social consensus rather than resorting to repression.

The political clash in Nicaragua is not between hard-liners and pragmatists; it is between the traditional conception of socialism and the ideas that originated in the 1960s. This debate would be taking place even without the U.S.; it is a normal part of any revolution. We should be asking ourselves not whether we have the right to criticize but which side of this debate we choose. The potential consequences of the outcome are extremely important. If a new model of socialism emerges from Nicaragua, many things will change in the Americas.

As far as I am concerned, only one objection is morally and politically legitimate: What right have we, who do not live in Nicaragua, to criticize? My own response to that question comes from the Italian experience. The Italian left, which includes the West's largest Communist party, realized early on that the Soviet model did not apply to the Italian experience. But it did not only criticize; the Italian left also developed its own theory and practice.

As far as I can tell, this kind of reflection and redefinition is missing in the American left. Americans rejected the Soviet model earlier than Europeans did, but they replaced it, in the 1960s, with another foreign import—a romanticizing of Third World revolutions. Since then, American leftists have been spouting invectives and slinging labels instead of trying to understand their own situation.

Nicaragua offers a defeated American left a vicarious taste of revolution, a symbolic issue that allows it to pretend that there really is an opposition to Reagan. The debate in *The Nation* shows that in many cases American leftists are talking not about Nicaragua but about their own projections. Thus it seems likely that many of the people who are uncritically enthusiastic today will be full of neoconservative disillusionment tomorrow.
Lucia Annunziata

CREDIBILITY, NORTH & SOUTH

San Francisco
When Michael Massing argued that not to pass judgment on the internal political process in Nicaragua would endanger the left's credibility, my initial response was to wonder, *What* credibility? Reagan has won twice in a row, and the left has scarcely hindered his agenda. The left in this country didn't build a public consensus to prevent the invasion of Grenada, nor was there much opposition in its aftermath. Reagan has gutted the public sector and the U.S. left has not been able to resist. The left was not even able to wring a no-first-strike clause out of Walter Mondale.

By contrast, the Sandinistas won a revolution in a country devastated by war, underdevelopment, debt and earthquake; were confronted by a hostile empire and its hostile financial institutions; survived C.I.A. destabilization and a draining, expensive war; and five years later they still won a national election with a greater majority than Reagan's. Did the U.S. left marvel at this accomplishment? How many people on the left stopped and said, My god, how did they *do* that?

Instead, Massing poses questions like "What are the divisions within the F.S.L.N. National Directorate?" as topics worthy of debate. I suppose that in this instance the U.S. left could teach the Sandinistas a thing or two about division and fragmentation, but I am far more interested in how the Sandinistas are organized, how they won such broad popular support and maintained it and how different political tendencies stand united in the face of a common enemy.

For the U.S. left to adopt such a lordly attitude toward the Sandinistas when it has such a meager political base seems like unabashed arrogance. To consider "conceding to reality" spheres of influence, national sovereignty, etc.—*principles*, not tactics—is worse than arrogance. It is saying to Nicaragua, We offer qualified opposition to Reagan, provided you conform to our standards. We, who understand what a country like Chile suffers when counterrevolution succeeds. We who are so wise.
David Westerhold

INTO THE LIBERAL CAMP

Detroit
The problem with well-meaning liberals who would save us from the disorder of revolution is that they often end up surrendering the values they set out to defend—in this case, democracy. The Massing Doctrine counsels Latin American revolutionaries to recognize the existence of spheres of influence in international affairs. If these revolutionary leaders would simply recognize the pre-eminent position of the United States in the affairs of the Western Hemisphere and attune their rhetoric, politics and strategy to that "distasteful" reality, the United States would leave them alone. The model for revolutionaries in Latin America should be Panama, which we all know is a model of democracy, advanced social policy and creative foreign affairs.

An obvious problem with the Massing Doctrine is what it says to revolutionary or democratic governments that are currently out of power in nations like El Salvador, Guatemala and Chile. The rebels in those countries have had the bad taste to rise up against regimes that are supported by the U.S. government. Rather than doing the reasonable thing and granting these rebellious movements a promise of nonintervention in return for a pledge that they will seek only to re-create Panama in their homelands, one administration after another has urged and participated in their murder and suppression. Unable to recognize a potential Panamanian when they see one,

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EDITORIALS.

Is Philly Burning?

Mayor Wilson Goode's destruction of a West Philadelphia neighborhood in order to remove a disorderly commune now takes its place in the monstrous tradition of contemporary social remedies far worse than the maladies they were meant to cure: the burning of a Vietnamese village in order to save it, the bombing of Lebanese civilians by a C.I.A.-backed group to deter terrorism, the *contra* invasion of Nicaragua to promote free elections. In each instance, the military solution seemed attractive to policy managers, who hoped that the swift use of a terrible sword would not only annihilate the enemy but secure the support of vengeful friends. Each time they have failed, precisely because the punishment was so blatantly inappropriate to the crime. Vengeance that takes innocent victims itself falls prey to the retribution of history.

Goode's desperate decision to bomb the MOVE commune's house was not an urgent battlefield choice but the last step in a progression of mistakes that began almost as soon as the guns were stilled from the first police confrontation with the group, in August 1978. In that violent fracas, Mayor Frank Rizzo was accused of overreaction to the point of race-baiting, and so his successor, the more liberal Bill Green, appointed a black city manager—Wilson Goode—to help reduce the racial heat. Goode owed his position and his power to the white political establishment, which duly gave its stamp of approval to his mayoral candidacy in 1983. It saw him as a token of integration who would help keep the lid on social unrest.

Johnson City, Tennessee MAY 3 1 1985

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When the block association in MOVE's neighborhood asked for help, Goode temporized, shrugged and stood on the civic ceremonies he prefers over the tough task of leadership. Chuck Stone, a leading black journalist for the *Philadelphia Daily News* wrote recently, "For a mayor who will tap-dance in a minute to cut a ribbon, Goode was notoriously absent this time as the man in charge." He shrank from the ordeal of negotiating with the militant commune and was so out of touch with its tactics and mentality that he paid no heed to warnings by the district attorney and neighbors that explosives and incendiaries were stored in the group's building. With the fateful bombing, Police Commissioner Gregore Sambor led what the community saw as a white invasion. Goode remained in his city hall bunker while Philly burned.

For the moment, white Philadelphia has rallied around the Mayor and, according to the press, thanks him for his militancy, however late and destructive. Black Philadelphia is not so sure. In an article for Pacific News Service, *Philadelphia Daily News* reporter Linn Washington wrote that much of the black community is angry about the tactics used. Professor Thad Mathis of Temple University predicts that white politicians will soon begin asking, "Do these black elected officials really make a difference?" Which is to say that the forces that hoped Goode would keep order better than they had done in the past will be shopping around for another symbol and a better manager.

Budget as Usual

Even before the House of Representatives passed its budget resolution—one of several versions promoted by contending ideological factions—it was clear that the Reagan Administration had won another far-reaching victory in its campaign to remake America. Democratic maneuvers managed to reduce the President's edematous defense program and to retain a small cost-of-living increase in Social Security payments. But both the spirit and the letter of the resolution suggest that Reagan's plan to undermine Federal support for social programs and public services is in no danger. The Democratic majority in the House found neither the will nor the way for an alternative. Budget Committee chair William Gray 3d explained why: "I can't ever pass a bill investing in urban America with this kind of debt."

If any Congressman should have been inspired to reverse the direction of the past four years, it was Gray. He is, after all, the Representative of the West Philadelphia district still smoldering from the attack on the MOVE commune—precisely the area of urban America that needs more Federal investment. He has been a leader in the Congressional Black Caucus, which, once again, has offered the most progressive and innovative budget plan. Talk about new ideas: if the Democrats think none are around, they need only adopt the Black Caucus's budget proposals.

But Gray was sandbagged by his President and his party. The Democrats have bought into the myth of military overkill, even if some would slightly moderate Reagan's madness. With trillions spent on defense, with tax laws that favor corporations and appease the middle class, and with monetary policies that encourage the dollar's international reign, the budget fight was over before it began.

The Center Holds

Two weeks ago, Italy went to the polls in a patchwork of municipal, provincial and regional elections. There were three big winners—the Christian Democrats of Ciriaco De Mita, the Socialists of Prime Minister Bettino Craxi and the Republicans of former Prime Minister Giovanni Spadolini. There was an even bigger loser: the Communists of Party Leader Alessandro Natta.

The Communists drew the largest vote in the European Parliament elections a year ago and had hoped to maintain that position in the Italian elections. The once-dominant Christian Democrats were plagued by scandal and lacked impressive leaders. They were embroiled in a continuous and confused battle with their coalition partners, the Socialists and the Republicans. For his part, Craxi had practically abandoned the Italian Socialist tradition. Halfhearted Reaganism in foreign affairs, three-quarter-hearted neoliberalism in economic ones—that was his policy, insofar as his allies allowed him one. The Republicans were the authentic party of neoliberalism but they needed Communist support to get their tax-reform package passed. Moreover, the governing coalition sought to lower real wage levels, spoke with at least two voices on foreign affairs and seemed to have run out of energy.

The electorate thought otherwise. They reduced the Communists' share of the vote from 34 percent to 30 percent, raised the Christian Democrats' from 32 percent to 34 percent and the Socialists' from 11 percent to 13 percent. True, the Communists did reasonably well compared with their showing in the same elections in 1980, but they were dumped from their position as the leading party in Genoa, Milan and Turin, managing to retain only their Emilian, Tuscan and Umbrian strongholds. They lost the mayoralty in Rome, did badly in the south, took losses everywhere.

What happened? Italians seem to appreciate the relative stability the country has experienced during the twenty-two months Craxi has been in office—the fourth-longest tenure of any Italian government since World War II. He discreetly tempered his fidelity to Reaganism by trips to Eastern Europe, by proposing a freeze on Euromissile deployment and by pointedly criticizing U.S. policies in Nicaragua. The Christian Democrats profited from an infusion of Catholic fervor. The Pope has gained popularity among some party supporters, and his open involvement in the election mobilized traditionalist voters. Meanwhile, the Republicans are regarded as the party of principle. Their great advantage is that they are neither Christian Democrats nor Socialists.

The Communist defeat was due primarily to the elec-

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torate's uncertainty about the party's programs. Like the German Social Democrats and the British Labor Party, the Communists lacked a clearcut economic blueprint. Their initiation of a referendum to block cuts in the national wage index made them appear to be placing special interests above the national welfare. Party Leader Natta was chosen to demonstrate continuity with the policies of the late Enrico Berlinguer. The party's "long march through the institutions" was to have brought it so many votes that the Christian Democrats or the Socialists would have had no choice but to include it in a governing coalition. Now the Communists are isolated, a situation that cannot be attributed solely to Washington's opposition to their accession to power. Those in the party who favor a more flexible policy—rapprochement with the Socialists, for example—may make themselves heard. Indeed, the defeat has a positive side. An internal debate on the party's future is likely, as is a change of leadership. Meanwhile, the present coalition will probably remain in office until the next general election, in 1988.

NORMAN BIRNBAUM

One-Way Traffic

Economics is one chamber in the six-gun the Reagan Administration points at obstreperous Latin American nations. With Nicaragua, at least, the economic pressure is official. In the case of Mexico, it is being applied more subtly. It began in March with a round of border station closings and customs slowdowns. These were officially explained as drug control measures and a response to the kidnapping and murder of U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent Enrique Camarena Salazar and his Mexican pilot. The killings were apparently ordered by key Mexican drug *traficantes*, who had the cooperation of corrupt law enforcement authorities.

Ambassador John Gavin and other U.S. officials complained about the slowness of Mexican authorities in investigating the crime. The State Department threatened to issue a travel advisory against parts of Mexico, which would be a serious blow to the country's vital tourist industry. The Reagan Administration proposed halting U.S. purchases of 50,000 barrels a day of Mexican oil at a time when Mexico's petroleum-based economy is in deep trouble.

Mexicans acknowledge that corruption is widespread, but they question how much of the U.S. government's reaction was drug related and how much was old-fashioned *norteamericano* heavy-handedness. Was it just by chance, Mexicans ask, that the Administration's get-tough policy coincided with Mexico's increasingly active role in the Contadora process in behalf of a negotiated peace in Central America?

Several alleged drug kingpins and corrupt officials have been arrested in Mexico in connection with Camarena's death. Many members of the Mexican Police Force have resigned, reportedly because of the continuing investigation. But murders are not limited to one side of the border. The day after the bodies of Camarena and his pilot were found, five undocumented Mexican workers were shot and left for dead in the Texas desert. Such tragedies occur with numbing frequency, but, as the Mexico City–based newspaper *Uno Más Uno* commented, Mexican officials aren't calling press conferences "to condemn [U.S. and Texas officials] for slowness and inefficiency because of their failure to solve these crimes quickly."

Mexicans point out another obvious fact. The big demand for drugs comes from north of the border. So the south supplies. For many *campesinos* and the urban poor, wages from the drug trade are the only alternative to no wages at all.

"I don't see any real drug control basis for the border [restrictions]," former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark told me. "It's a weapon the Reagan Administration has chosen to manifest its power and to discipline Mexico for policies it doesn't like. It's a way of sticking our thumb in Mexico's eye, a neat way of showing how much trouble we can give." He adds: "No tortilla curtain is going to keep illegal drugs out. If you can't keep illegal workers out, you can't keep drugs out. They come in much smaller packages." Clark also questions the propriety of using D.E.A. agents like Camarena in Mexico in the first place.

The U.S. border with its southern neighbor is a long one. Mexicans wish it was a common one as well.

PHIL PRIMACK

Phil Primack is a reporter who recently spent three months in Mexico.

CAREY McWILLIAMS FELLOWSHIPS

We are pleased to announce that the Department of History at the University of California, Los Angeles, has awarded four Carey McWilliams Fellowships for the 1985-86 academic year. The fellowships, ranging from $1,000 to $5,000, are awarded for graduate study in American history, "in areas of concern to the late Carey McWilliams, particularly the history of California, of ethnic and racial minorities, of civil rights and liberties in the United States." The winners are Jacqueline Braitman, Mike Fraga, Christopher Friday and Clare Spark.

GOING AWAY FOR THE SUMMER?

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Remember El Salvador?

How is it that over the past two years the United States has been organizing, supplying, overseeing and in many cases actually executing the heaviest bombing and most ferocious aerial war ever seen in the Americas and not one coherent report of the extent, viciousness or consequences of this campaign has appeared in any major U.S. newspaper or magazine?

The outrage to truth is barely credible. Most mainstream publications are echoing the complacent and ignorant words of an editorial in *The Christian Science Monitor* for May 16 which called El Salvador "the one region in Central America in which United States policies clearly have been successful. The U.S. has backed the forces of moderation. . . . [Duarte] can be expected to progress with reforms." The only substantive achievement here is that the United States is getting away with war crimes with barely a word of description or protest. Unfortunately, the U.S. left and left-liberal community, preoccupied with Nicaragua, has not mounted a campaign to disclose the atrocities. El Salvador is going the way of Guatemala: a monument to counterinsurgency of unimaginable brutality and a testament to the gutless complicity of the U.S. press.

When the United States experienced the first urban aerial bombardment in its history, courtesy of the police force of Philadelphia, the news coverage was massive, the investigation assiduous and the indignation voluble. The nation of El Salvador is not as convenient for journalists as the state of Pennsylvania, but many U.S. reporters are based there and others visit it regularly. Since the middle of 1983, an aerial war has been responsible for most of El Salvador's 500,000 internal refugees and for many of the 750,000 refugees outside the country's borders. This war has almost entirely escaped the attention of the press corps, even when it reached a particularly savage level during that country's presidential election campaign of 1984. Almost as many U.S. reporters were in El Salvador then as were in New Hampshire during the primary season. It is as if 750-pound bombs were being dropped on the White Mountains, the farmers of New Hampshire being regularly machine-gunned from the air and their families being mutilated and slaughtered, and the press corps in Concord on primary night said nothing about it.

War as Open Secret

As noted in the September 1984 issue of *Alert!*, the monthly newspaper of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador:

> In El Salvador the Pentagon has unleashed a counter-insurgency air war on a scale never seen in Latin America. . . . The fact that this unprecedented bombardment is *completely* absent from press accounts is all the more astonishing as the carpet bombing of the Guazapa volcano at times literally shakes the residences of the international journalists, safely ensconced in the capital city.

What is taking place, as you may have guessed, is a "secret war." A secret war may be defined as a military enterprise carried out by the United States and known to its victims, international observers, humanitarian organizations, foreign journalists and the domestic radical community but, for reasons of collective internal censorship, not reported in the mainstream media of the United States. In this sense, the U.S. bombings from the early 1960s through the early 1970s of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were "secret," until circumstances permitted this collective censorship to be relaxed, though in the case of South Vietnam much of it is still in force.

Witnesses to the Slaughter

Anyone who doubts that such a war is being waged in El Salvador should obtain two reports from Americas Watch. "Free Fire" was published last August; "Draining the Sea . . . " appeared this March. Equally valuable is "U.S. Aid to El Salvador," a report presented to the bipartisan Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus by Representatives Jim Leach and George Miller and Senator Mark Hatfield. There has been some fine reporting by Chris Hedges in *The Christian Science Monitor* and the *Dallas Morning News*, by Mary Jo McConahay for Pacific News Service, and by Bob Ostertag in *Alert!* and *The Guardian*. So far as I and my colleague Maura Sheehy, who assisted in the research for this column, could determine, that is more or less the full story for a nation of over 226 million people whose journalists give each other more prizes each year than the press of the rest of the world put together.

The compilers of "Free Fire" write that:

> thousands of noncombatants are being killed in indiscriminate attacks by bombardments in the air, shelling and ground sweeps. Thousands more are being wounded. . . . As best we can determine, these attacks on civilian noncombatants in conflict zones are part of a deliberate policy . . . to force civilians to flee . . . depriving the guerrillas of a civilian population. . . . The cost of pursuing this policy, in terms of human suffering, is beyond measurement. And, of course, it is a policy that flagrantly violates the laws of war.

The March Americas Watch report amplifies this picture, showing that while old-style death-squad activity has abated somewhat, terror bombing and scorched-earth tactics have more than adequately substituted for it. Lethal U.S. high-tech weapons now accompany the bayonet, the machete and the bludgeon. Over one-fifth of the Salvadoran population of 5 million are refugees, a higher percentage than the corresponding figure in South Vietnam at the height of that war.

The report to the bipartisan caucus puts the aerial war in its proper perspective. El Salvador—by which I mean the elite that seeks to retain power—is now an aid junkie, courtesy of the United States. The elite needs the war to get the aid that prevents the economic disintegration of the country (which would otherwise be bankrupt), aid that keeps it in power. Of the $1.7 billion in U.S. aid that has gone to El Salvador since 1981, no less than 74 percent has been devoted to war and war-related activities. An increasing

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amount of the present $500 million annual stipend is used for the aerial war. The last thing the Salvadoran elite will ever want is peace negotiations.

In October 1983, El Salvador's military overseers in the U.S. Defense Department switched to aerial terror after repeated successes by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front. The basic techniques of the air war are: demolition and fragmentation; the dropping of 500- and 750-pound iron bombs, many fitted with nose rods to convert them to "antipersonnel" devices; incendiary bombing, using Israeli-supplied napalm and U.S.-supplied white phosphorus; machine gunning, with A-37 fighter bombers, AC-47s (those "Puff the Magic Dragons" of Vietnam infamy), Huey and Hughes helicopters. A U.S. intelligence battalion based in Honduras flies OV-1 planes over El Salvador on frequent intelligence missions; their observations are processed by the Pentagon and fed within two hours to the Salvadoran Air Force by the local U.S. supervisors. U.S. pilots oversee the resulting missions and frequently take part in them.

The bombing is indiscriminate, designed to terrorize the people it has not killed into taking flight. The Salvadoran Army contributes regular massacres, to accelerate this flight. In honor of South Lebanon in 1982, Colonel Sigifredo Ochoa speaks of an "Israeli solution": establishing free-fire zones which, journalists are told, contain no "people," only "terrorists." Conforming to this inhumanity, Ochoa's troops have prevented relief organizations from getting food and medical supplies to the desperate victims trapped inside those areas. Ochoa is frequently given respectful treatment by U.S. journalists because he exemplifies the younger, more efficient breed of Salvadoran officer.

Lies and Silence

At all times the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador and the Administration in Washington have lied about the uses of [illegible]id, the increasingly grotesque evasion of the fifty-five-[illegible]limit on military advisors, the use of AC-47s in com-[illegible]e rate of fire of the guns installed in them, and [illegible]ar crimes being committed. The facts are there. There are towns and villages in ruins. La Escopeta is a "ghost town," Chris Hedges reported in *The Christian Science Monitor* for April 6. "Every structure appears to have been hit at least once by a bomb and many show signs of being strafed by machine-gun fire." According to Hedges, parts of Cabanas province look like a wasteland. Americas Watch observers have described hearing the Salvadoran Army's 105-millimeter howitzers blasting away through the night in indiscriminate bombardment. Camps on the Honduran border are crammed with refugees. Where are the reporters to cover these reruns of Guernica and Cambodia? Instead, the U.S. media buries itself in self-serving reconstructions of wars fought ten and forty years ago.

The mainstream press typically gives upbeat stories about President José Napoleón Duarte's progress toward defeating the rebels. He is hailed for ordering the Salvadoran Air Force to avoid indiscriminate bombing. In January, James LeMoyne of *The New York Times* provided a straight-faced account of such an order given last fall, with absolutely no discussion of what the air force had been doing before that time and whether the order had any purpose, or result, other than to be faithfully transcribed by the U.S. press corps. In many reports, notably the admiring ones by Edward Cody in *The Washington Post* on the "bigger, tougher" and "trim" Salvadoran Army, one almost gets the sense that the war is winding down, that the "problem" has been solved. And, as noted above, the concentration on Nicaragua by the U.S. left and left-liberal community has contributed to this mood. But an hour's reading of human rights reports and some foreign journalism instantly attests that El Salvador is still a charnel house. The U.S.-backed forces appear to be winning only because the United States is repeating its achievements in Indochina: bombing, shelling saturation machine-gunning, clearing "guerrilla territory" by spreading terror.

Duarte: Pimping for Massacre

An article in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* for May 12 by Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, Central America correspondent for the London *Spectator*, put it quite simply:

> If the bright mood in the capital suggests that El Salvador is returning to the fold of civilized nations, it is a consummate deception; it is just that the war has moved from assassinations in the cities to indiscriminate bombing in the countryside. . . . The strict rules about aerial bombardment [Duarte] introduced last September are scoffed at by the army high command and particularly by Gen. Juan Rafael Bustillo, the tough air force chief. That is the price Duarte has to pay to keep the loyalty of the armed forces and to stay in power.

In other words, all the most ghastly crimes perpetrated in Vietnam, Cambodia and Guatemala are being repeated in El Salvador. The supervisory criminals are ensconced in the Defense Department and the upper echelons of the Reagan Administration, fully cognizant of what their executors—Salvadorans working shoulder to shoulder with U.S. instructors—are doing on the ground or in the air, bombing, machine-gunning and massacring. All you need is a complicit or cowed press and a mendacious State Department and the American people need scarcely know that repeats of My Lai and Operation Speedy Express are taking place not far south of Miami and are sponsored by their government. The story has only got worse since a House Committee on Foreign Affairs report of 1981, which stated:

> Current [U.S. military] assistance, however, is being used for purposes abominable to any concept of democracy or respect for human rights or dignity. It is granted on the false premise that the Duarte government represents a viable middle ground in Salvadoran political life and the civilian government is both willing and capable of controlling the baser instincts of the military whose arms maintain them in power.

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DISPATCHES.

■ NORWAY: Underwater Listening Posts

One of America's most closely guarded military secrets is the location and capabilities of twenty-two chains of listening devices on the ocean floor—the so-called SOSUS network. The system detects and tracks Soviet submarines around the world and is managed by U.S. Naval Intelligence.

One SOSUS chain reportedly stretches from England via Ireland to Greenland; others are along the East and West Coasts of the United States and the coastlines of Italy, Turkey and Japan. One of the most important stretches from the northern coast of Norway to the island of Svalbard in the Arctic Ocean. Most of the Soviet Union's nuclear submarines must cross it on their way to the Atlantic Ocean.

In September 1983 the Norwegian magazine *Ikkevold* ("Nonviolence") revealed that the shore station in Norway that collects data from the Arctic SOSUS chain is located on the island of Andoya. The island is a virtual military camp; 19 percent of its 8,000 inhabitants work directly for the Norwegian military. Seven Norwegian Orion antisubmarine aircraft are stationed there, as is NATO's Northern Command radio station, which is used to coordinate communications with the U.S. Navy's Atlantic fleet.

Ikkevold published these classified details, as well as the names of the Norwegian intelligence officers who run the post. Last November the Norwegian government indicted the editors under Criminal Laws 90 and 91, which make it illegal to "disclose or to assist in disclosing information that should be kept secret with the purpose of undermining the security of the State in relation to other States."

During the ongoing trial, *Ikkevold*'s editors have argued that the public has a right to know about the SOSUS base because "it can give the U.S. a first-strike capability" and makes Norway a prime target in any nuclear conflict between the superpowers. The editors charge that the Andoya base was introduced by subterfuge. Unlike the nearly two dozen SOSUS shore stations elsewhere around the world, its existence has been kept secret. That is because, the editors say, U.S. military personnel are constantly on the island—a violation of a policy prohibiting the permanent stationing of American military personnel on Norwegian soil.

■ INTELLIGENCE: The Gag Is On

Last October, Samuel Morison, a civilian employee of the U.S. Naval Intelligence Support Center, was arrested for providing American satellite photographs of a Soviet aircraft carrier under construction to *Jane's Defence Weekly*, a London magazine. With the Navy's knowledge, Morison had been moonlighting as U.S. editor of *Jane's Fighting Ships*, a sister publication of the weekly.

The Reagan Administration seized on the case as an opportunity to deter civil servants from leaking classified information to the press. Morison is charged under the 1917 Espionage Act; the only previous government employee prosecuted under that law was Daniel Ellsberg, in the Pentagon papers affair. (The charges were dismissed because of government misconduct.) Although Morison's trial is not scheduled to begin until October 8, the Justice Department may have already achieved one dangerous precedent.

The government demanded that in return for access to relevant classified material under discovery procedures, the defense counsel must obtain a security clearance. That means undergoing a full background investigation, signing releases to permit access to their F.B.I. files and providing detailed personal information. Morison's defense counsel refused, citing the 1980 Classified Information Procedures Act, which governs the disclosure of classified information in pretrial discovery proceedings.

In response, the government obtained an order from Federal District Court Judge Joseph H. Young requiring Morison's defense counsel to sign a document pledging that he would not disclose "any classified national security information or documents . . . unless specifically authorized in writing to do so by an authorized representative of the U.S. government."

The gag order is so sweeping that it applies to information obtained from public sources even after the trial is over, including newspaper articles about satellite intelligence gathering, if the government deems them classified. Morison's attorneys have refused to agree to those terms. If not overturned on appeal, the order will essentially place a lifetime gag order on anyone associated with the Morison trial. Of more immediate consequence, it would make Morison's defense considerably more difficult, because his attorneys would be barred from talking to potential expert witnesses like former intelligence officials, academics and journalists.

The Justice Department regards the Morison case as the opening wedge for an official secrets act. If he is convicted with the help of the gag order, the door will be opened for further Espionage Act prosecutions of government employees who go to the media with stories about wrongdoing in their agencies. Recently, the Central Intelligence Agen[illegible] floated a trial balloon—a proposal for a law that [illegible] accomplish this objective. The Administration la[illegible] the proposal, but it may introduce some kind of [illegible] in the future. In the meantime, it is seeking [illegible] Morison case a precedent that will accompli[illegible] thing in the courts.

■ UNITED STATES: Star Wars Logic

"There are no circumstances under which this Admini[illegible]tration will abandon research on the Strategic Defense Initiative," John Hawes, the new Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs, told us. "I just don't see how you can avoid pursuing it. . . . The Soviets are doing it." Hawes, a career Foreign Service officer, was recently given the job of making the case for Star Wars. His pitch goes as follows: We don't know whether the technology will work for ten years, at which time we will deploy the system only if (a) it has been proved to be effective in knocking down offensive missiles, and (b) if it would be "cost effective"—that is, cheaper for us to deploy than for the Rus-

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KAI BIRD AND MAX HOLLAND

sians to overwhelm it by building thousands of new offensive missiles.

In response to critics who say that Star Wars research will trigger an immediate Soviet missile buildup, Hawes said: "The Soviets . . . have no incentive to build new missiles today because [if] we . . . find in ten years that SDI works and is cost effective and so deploy the system . . . their missiles [would be] obsolete." On the other hand, if the United States doesn't deploy the system, the new Soviet missiles would be redundant. This is but a glimpse of the illogic the Administration will undoubtedly employ in the public relations battle to come if—or, rather, when—the Geneva arms talks fail.

He averred he could not understand why anyone in the Soviet military establishment should want to build more missiles just because Washington was spending billions on Star Wars research. Isn't it possible, we asked, that Soviet generals might come up with a more cost-effective security formula than the Pentagon's, telling the Politburo that thousands of cheap missiles could overwhelm the American system? "If there's any [chance they could do that], we wouldn't deploy it," he replied.

Isn't it possible that our perceptions of Soviet intentions may be wrong? "No," said Hawes. "I think our perceptions of them are accurate, while theirs of us are wrong. They have a long history of relying on force."

But then disingenuous logic never leads to good history.

■ INDIA: Bhopal Update

The Bhopal tragedy is far from over. Victims of the cloud of methyl isocyanate (MIC) that escaped from a Union Carbide pesticide plant last December are dying at an average of two a day.

Some of those deaths might have been prevented if Union Carbide and the Indian government had responded to evidence—including autopsies—indicating that the first victims died from cyanide poisoning. Company officials were aware of this possibility. A 1976 Union Carbide report states that thermal decomposition of MIC gas may produce hydrogen cyanide. Visiting Bhopal days after the accident, Warren Anderson, chair of the company, brought supplies of sodium thiosulfate, an antidote to cyanide poisoning, which is not manufactured in India. In the same week, Dr. Bipin Avashia, medical director of a Union Carbide plant in Charleston, West Virginia, telexed the following advisory to Bhopal: "If cyanide poisoning is suspected use amyl nitrate. If no effect, use sodium nitrate 0.3 gms. and sodium thiosulphate 12.5 gms."

Neither the company nor the government publicized this information. Indeed, according to the Calcutta weekly magazine *Sunday*, Union Carbide medical officers in India and health officials of the government of Madhya Pradesh issued statements to the local press denying that there was any evidence of cyanide poisoning.

The first dosages of sodium thiosulfate were not administered until February 14, more than two months after the accident. Even today, only about 500 of the estimated 1,000 most serious cases are receiving regular injections of the antidote, and it is in short supply. Union Carbide could easily provide what is needed. Could it be that it does not want to admit any legal responsibility to the victims?

■ EUROPE: East-West Archives War

The governments of Bonn, East Berlin and Moscow are engaged in a protracted struggle over history. At issue are municipal records from the West German cities of Bremen, Hamburg and Lübeck and from the capital of the Soviet Republic of Estonia, Tallinn, formerly called Reval. The origin of this archival tug of war was World War II. When the allies commenced bombing the Reich, German cities sought safer locations for their records. The three north German cities removed their records, which go back to the Middle Ages, to mine shafts. The tunnels, however, were located near the town of Bernberg, which fell under the Soviet zone of occupation after V-E Day. The records were then shipped to Moscow.

The transfer of the Estonian archives was less voluntary. Reval was the kind of city Hitler had in mind when he launched his campaign to incorporate all ethnic Germans into a greater Reich. Although they constituted only about 5 percent of Reval's pre-war population of 140,000, ethnic Germans had ruled the city. Claiming that the city's municipal heritage belonged to Germany, the Nazis removed all the archives to an unknown location.

At its inception in 1949, the Bonn government retained control of the Reval archives by passing a law that protected the cultural possessions of all ethnic German refugees from the East. For its part, the Soviet Union in the 1950s turned over about half of its cache of German municipal archives to the East German government, which stored them in Potsdam, near Berlin. Some of the records listed on the original inventories were missing, but Soviet officials steadfastly denied any knowledge of their whereabouts.

The impasse persisted until 1977, when Bonn announced its general agreement with a Unesco principle that archives belong where they were produced. Sensing that the West Germans were ready to negotiate, the Russians reversed the position they had maintained for years to West German historians and the press. An official in the Soviet Embassy in Bonn admitted that the missing records were still in Moscow, and, in 1980, the Russians offered to exchange those files, together with the ones in Potsdam, for the Reval records. An agreement seemed imminent, but the new chill in U.S.-Soviet relations intervened. The meeting in West Germany of the International Council on Archives, held last year, seemed a fit occasion to settle the dispute. But when Peter Boenisch, the West German government spokesman, stated that Bonn did not recognize the Soviet annexation of Estonia, the exchange fell through. Boenisch apparently calculated that scoring propaganda points against the Russians over postwar borders is more important than regaining German history.

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ARTICLES.

RUSSIA AND THE THIRD WORLD

The Revolutionary Road Runs Out

JERRY HOUGH

Despite the Reagan Administration's incessant alarms, Soviet intervention in the Third World has declined in recent years. Even the White House has taken note of this development, attributing it to a tough U.S. military posture. But a government that has shown itself reluctant to fight in Lebanon and Nicaragua could hardly have deterred the Russians, so there must be another explanation for Moscow's lowered profile in the developing countries.

The Soviet Union's current policies are the result of a changed perception of the world. The evolution of this view can be traced in a little-noticed debate that has been going on for the past twenty years in the Soviet media, particularly in the influential scholarly journals. The discussion has moved the foreign policy establishment toward a new consensus and has influenced the leadership.

In the 1950s, the reigning orthodoxy held that economic development in Third World countries would be hindered as long as they were part of the capitalist world economy. Foreign-based corporations, the argument ran, exploited those nations, and foreign creditors were interested mainly in investing in raw materials and agriculture rather than in providing capital for manufacturing.

According to that theory, national-liberation revolutions would take place in two stages. The first was an anticolonial revolution to win political independence. The second was a communist revolution to secure economic independence. Soviet analysts contended that the nationalist sentiments that swept away colonial rule would overthrow foreign capitalist domination.

In the early 1960s, however, voices challenging that world view began to be heard. In 1963, Leonid Goncharov, the young deputy director of the Institute of Africa, stated that, on balance, the capitalist nations of the West were not engaged solely in exploiting the resources of the Third World. Driven by a desire to preserve the capitalist system and to compete with the Soviet Union, they had begun providing various subsidies to poor countries. Goncharov and some of his colleagues propounded the view that Western investment, if properly controlled by the governments, was not harmful; indeed it could stimulate growth. Furthermore, the Third World countries' need for Western economic aid would make them less radical.

Other Soviet specialists, most notably Nodari Simoniia of the Institute of Oriental Studies, argued that anti-Western nationalism was not as powerful a force as ethnic or tribal nationalism. Therefore, given the need for foreign investment, the second stage of the orthodox national-liberation scenario was not inevitable.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Simoniia said that Marx was right when he wrote that feudalism, or preindustrial society, produces the class forces that create capitalism. Simoniia saw developments in the Third World as roughly analogous to those that occurred in Europe 150 years ago, and he argued that once a country reaches the capitalist stage it will remain there for a long time. Thus the chance of a communist revolution occurring in a country that had embarked on the capitalist road was slim, except in extraordinary circumstances.

In the early 1970s, several leading Latin Americanists, notably Boris Koval and Anatolii Shulgovsky, applied a similar form of analysis to their specialty. They concluded that the major countries of Latin America were so advanced economically that they should be compared to the countries of southern Europe rather than to Africa or Asia. Just as the southern European nations were making a transition from military dictatorship to representative democracy, the major Latin American countries would do the same. The Soviet scholars even warned that Salvador Allende's government in Chile was following too radical a course given the army's strength, an assessment subsequently confirmed when it was overthrown.

Such views were, of course, hotly contested. Conservative analysts clung to the orthodoxies of the 1950s, and the leading Third World scholars at the Institute of World Economics and International Relations (IMEMO), most prominently Victor Tiagunenko and Georgii Mirsky, advanced an updated, more sophisticated version of the old line.

The debate goes on. Today, however, most serious scholars hold that a "capitalist orientation" is best suited to economic growth, while a "socialist orientation" will better promote social development and social justice. Many analysts retain high hopes that the revolutions in South Yemen and Ethiopia will continue on a socialist path; others predict those countries will follow a course more like Egypt's. Some neo-orthodox scholars now pin their hopes on "new left" groups like the Sandinistas and the Iranian-backed Mujahedeen rather than on traditional Communist Parties.

Events of the 1970s seemed to confirm the arguments of scholars pessimistic about the prospects for revolution. Asian and Latin American countries that were fully integrated into the world economy prospered while the socialist-bloc countries fared poorly unless they had major petroleum reserves. Radical revolutions occurred in only a few preindustrial countries—South Yemen, Afghanistan and Ethiopia—and the industrializing Third World nations drifted toward the political center or the right. Even socialist

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nations like Angola and Mozambique would become more moderate in the 1980s.

By the end of the decade, IMEMO had essentially thrown in the towel. A new deputy director, Ivan Ivanov, was appointed to supervise the economic department, and he was contemptuous of the orthodox theory of "nonequivalent trade between the metropolis and the periphery," the idea that there was an inherent unfairness in trade relations between the Soviet Union and its Eastern European and Third World clients. Moreover, he took a positive view of the role of the multinational corporation in Third World economic development.

"The young states," he said, "often gain access to the technical-financial potential of the transnational corporation, while preserving national sovereignty over natural resources and their economy." When Aleksandr Iakovlev was made director of IMEMO in 1983, one of his first acts was to oust Mirsky as head of the Third World department and replace him with an economist who adhered to the majority view that the developing countries must be integrated into the world economy.

What implications does the new scholarly consensus have for Soviet foreign policy? If powerful economic forces make socialism unlikely in industrializing Third World countries, it is a waste of money for the Soviet Union to promote revolution in those places. It should limit itself to subsidizing client states like Vietnam and South Yemen, which provide port facilities for the Soviet Navy; selling arms to countries like Angola and Libya to earn hard currency; and sending aid to Nicaragua to twit the United States. The Soviet leadership's inclination has been to retreat partially into a shell. The only exception is its policy toward Afghanistan, which is regarded as part of the Soviet Union's historical sphere of influence.

Yet to limit foreign involvement to a few radical, preindustrial countries means conceding the large industrializing nations to the West. That is scarcely a proper long-term policy for a nation that regards itself as a superpower.

And so Simoniia—and apparently his boss, Evgenii Primakov, director of the Institute of Oriental Studies—advocates courting the large industrial countries there. For Simoniia, India is the prime example. As a general rule, he has written, in countries where "the internal market has progressed far enough and serves as the chief base of national capitalist [development], one characteristically finds an independent foreign policy and an active positive role in the nonaligned movement [India and others]." Simoniia and Primakov say that Soviet policy in the Middle East should be oriented toward Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, as well as Syria and the radical elements of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

If the Soviet Union wanted to engage in imaginative geopolitical maneuvering, it could pursue an aggressively anti-American strategy aimed at wooing West Germany and Japan. The new director of IMEMO, Iakovlev, has suggested just such a policy. He has written of "a relative leveling in the strength of the three centers of power—the U.S.A., Western Europe and Japan," arguing that "in the historically foreseeable future the centrifugal tendency in the capitalist world will grow."

The problem with the Simoniia/Primakov strategy in relation to the Third World is that the Russians have little to offer the more advanced of those nations. Like them, its primary exports are raw materials; the only industrial goods it sells abroad are arms, which are readily available on the world market. India is the only sizable industrializing country whose political goals are compatible with Soviet interests.

Not long before he became Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev chaired an unusual session of the Foreign Policy Committee of the Supreme Soviet devoted to discussing how to expand trade relations with the Third World, regardless of ideological considerations. The precedent for such a policy already exists in the Soviet Union's dealings with Argentina. Moscow ignored that country's military dictatorship, its boycott of the Moscow Olympics and its support for anti-Sandinista guerrillas in Nicaragua in return for access to Argentine grain.

Nevertheless, the Soviet Union's prospects of expanded trade with the Third World are hindered by its inability to produce industrial goods that are competitive with the West's. It cannot even make goods that are technologically sophisticated enough for Eastern European and Third World markets. The basic problem is that the overcentralized Soviet economy is poorly adapted to modern industrial production.

As long as the Soviet Union eschews fundamental economic reform, it concedes Third World countries to the West, both sociopolitically (on this score it may already have lost irrevocably, assuming the West follows intelligent economic policies) and geopolitically. And that too is a

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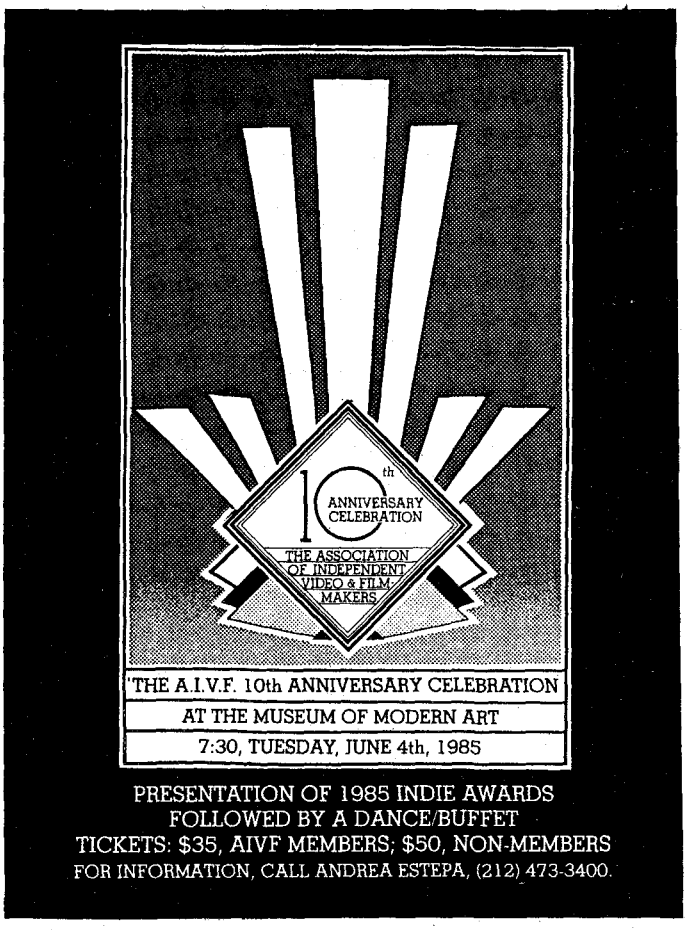
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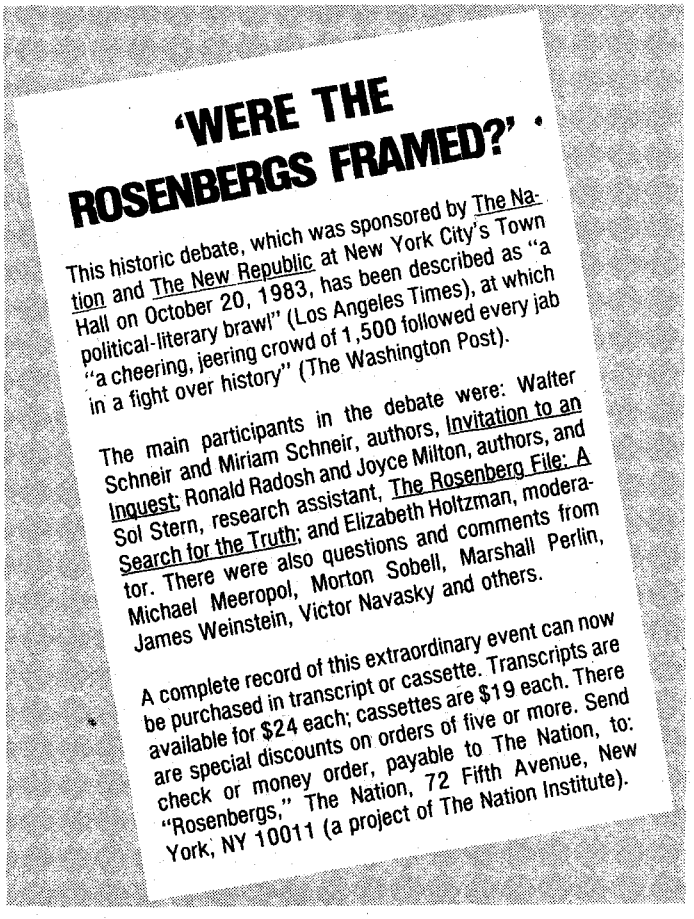
'WERE THE ROSENBERGS FRAMED?'
This historic debate, which was sponsored by The Nation and The New Republic at New York City's Town Hall on October 20, 1983, has been described as "a political-literary brawl" (Los Angeles Times), at which "a cheering, jeering crowd of 1,500 followed every jab in a fight over history" (The Washington Post).
The main participants in the debate were: Walter Schneir and Miriam Schneir, authors, Invitation to an Inquest; Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton, authors, and Sol Stern, research assistant, The Rosenberg File: A Search for the Truth; and Elizabeth Holtzman, moderator. There were also questions and comments from Michael Meeropol, Morton Sobell, Marshall Perlin, James Weinstein, Victor Navasky and others.
A complete record of this extraordinary event can now be purchased in transcript or cassette. Transcripts are available for $24 each; cassettes are $19 each. There are special discounts on orders of five or more. Send check or money order, payable to The Nation, to: "Rosenbergs," The Nation, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011 (a project of The Nation Institute).

point being made sotto voce in the Soviet debates on the Third World. The following words, written by economist A. Dinkevich on problems of strategy in Third World countries, were intended to apply to the Soviet system as well:

> A course toward a closed economy or, in other words, toward economic autarky is, as history shows, a course without a future. It is a path leading to a dead end. . . . The higher the level of participation in the system of the international division of labor, the higher the tempos of economic growth. . . . Extreme protectionism, carried out over an unjustifiably long time, is fraught with negative consequences: the preservation and extension of backward, noncompetitive, inefficient production with high costs of production, low productivity of labor and low quality of production.

Gorbachev is signaling in many ways that he intends to enact the reforms necessary to make the Soviet Union more competitive and innovative in the world arena. It is a challenge that will test U.S. maturity and will present opportunities as well as dangers. An integration of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe into the world economy—thus into world civilization to a much greater extent than they are now—will mark the end of the postwar era. The challenge is to shape the new age in more intelligent ways than was the case with the old one. □

THE AIR-CONTROLLER CRUNCH

Why the Skies Are Unfriendlier

BILL BLUM AND GINA LOBACO

On August 23, 1984, shortly after 11 A.M., Wings West Flight 628 departed from San Luis Obispo, California. It was a picture-postcard day. Visibility was fifteen miles; temperature, 75 degrees. After becoming airborne, the captain asked air traffic controllers at the Los Angeles En Route Center in Palmdale for flight clearance to San Francisco International Airport.

An inexperienced 25-year-old controller, one of several thousand trainees hired by the Federal Aviation Administration after the 1981 Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) strike, took the call. After establishing radar contact with the Wings West craft as it veered to the northwest, he requested an altitude report. The pilot responded, "Three thousand one, climbing." Moments later, Flight 628 disappeared from the radarscope; it had collided head-on with a two-seat Rockwell Aero Commander. Seventeen persons, including all thirteen Wings West passengers, were killed.

Two months later the young controller and the 47-year-old supervisor who was observing his performance testified

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at a National Transportation Safety Board hearing that they never saw the Rockwell plane on their radarscope and had no way of warning the Wings West pilot of the impending collision. Despite a lengthy investigation by the N.T.S.B., the cause of the tragedy may never be known.

"In this business, miles go by in the blink of an eye," reflects Anthony Skirlick Jr., a veteran controller at the L.A. En Route Center, who was also on duty when Flight 628 went down. "Two airplanes on a head-on course close in on each other at about 17 miles a minute. A crash like Wings West makes you painfully aware of the enormous responsibility you have in directing air traffic."

According to many controllers, that responsibility has become increasingly burdensome since the Reagan Administration fired 11,400 controllers nearly four years ago. "Shortly after the strike, the F.A.A. said it would be more people-oriented," complains Howie Barte, another veteran controller, "but after four years, nothing has changed." Barte, who is based in Rhode Island, had refused to join the PATCO walkout because of the law banning strikes by Federal employees. His attitude indicates that, as the F.A.A.'s Task Force on Management and Employee Relations concluded in a survey released last December, morale is "as bad as in 1981, or perhaps a bit worse."

High on the list of controller grievances are the critical staff shortages that have persisted since the strike. From a pre-strike level of more than 16,000, the number of controllers fell to approximately 5,000 during the walkout. There are now 14,300 controllers and the F.A.A. has no plans to hire more. But only 7,779 of the controllers now on the job are fully qualified journeymen (the highest rating) and roughly half that number will be eligible for retirement within four years. The remainder of the work force consists of assistants and trainees. Controllers often need as much as two years of training; half of those who start drop out.

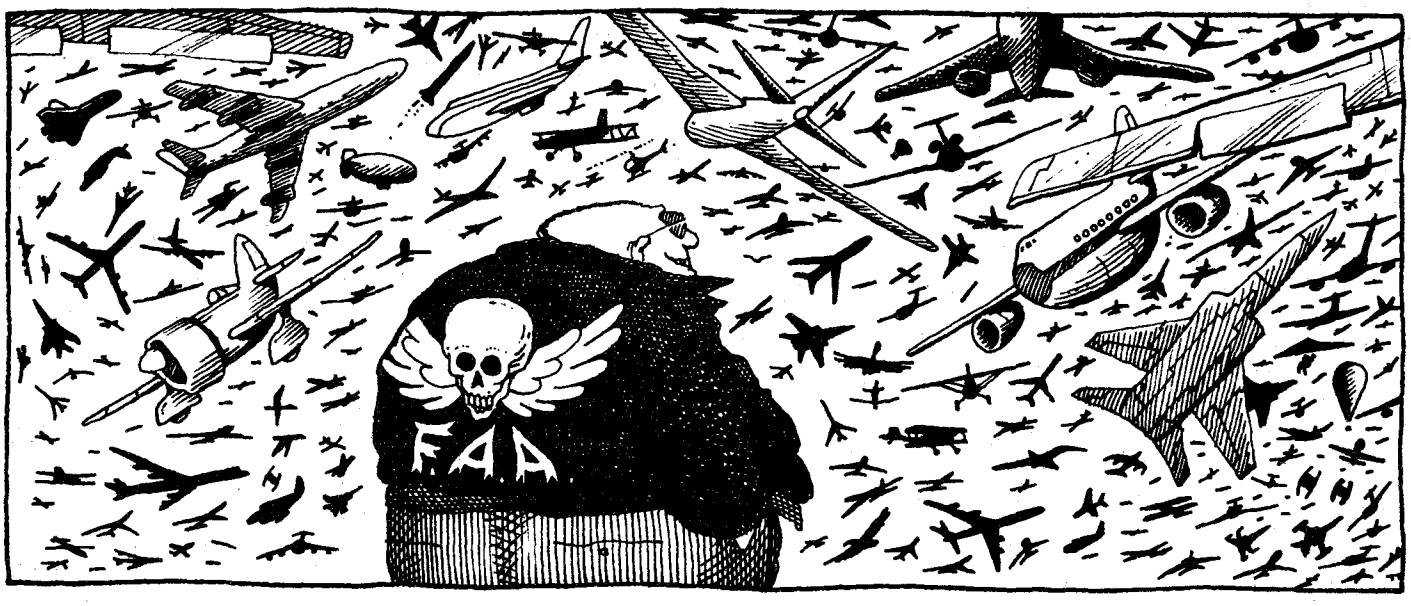
The reduced force of controllers must handle a volume of air traffic 8 to 10 percent higher than the pre-strike level, as a result of deregulation and the improved economy. In some areas, such as New York City, traffic is up nearly 20 percent. According to the F.A.A., until 1984 there were only six days in history on which controllers guided over 100,000 flights nationwide. There were fifty-four such days in 1984 alone.

"The F.A.A.'s answer to the staffing shortage and the higher flight volume has been enormous overtime," says Skirlick. Six-day weeks are common at busy facilities, he says. The statistics clearly substantiate his assertions. In the last three months of 1984, 300 controllers, supervisors and staff at the Chicago En Route Center logged more than 17,400 hours of overtime. Similar workloads have been reported in Los Angeles, Atlanta, New York, Boston and elsewhere. In Europe, controllers typically average thirty-two-hour workweeks. Many U.S. controllers told us they have difficulty even obtaining sick leaves or vacations.

Barte and Skirlick contend that personnel shortages can no longer be attributed to the PATCO firings; now they are the result of a political decision by the F.A.A. to cut costs. The agency is "simply echoing the Reagan Administration's position on reducing the number of government workers," Skirlick charges. Since 1981, the agency has trimmed its administrative regions from eleven to nine. In addition, the Grace commission, President Reagan's blue-ribbon Private Sector Survey on Cost Control, has recommended closing seven more centers by 1990, which would eliminate at least 300 controllers and 244 other jobs.

Stress, which labor analyst Stanley Aronowitz has dubbed "the black lung of the technical classes," is also approaching a critical level among controllers. In 1973, the F.A.A. commissioned a Boston University research team led by psychiatrist Robert Rose to conduct a long-term physiological study of the causes and effects of stress on controllers. Rose's 800-page report, published in 1978, revealed much depression and alcohol abuse among controllers. The study found an unusually high incidence of hypertension among the work force. Blood and urine tests of 406 controllers showed that 39 percent of them had excessive levels of cortisol, a chemical byproduct of stress.

From all indications, stress levels today are as high, if not



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higher, than they were three years ago, when PATCO members complained that working conditions had become unbearable. "There are many heart-related problems among employees at the center," says Patty Haughenberry, who works at the Los Angeles En Route Center. "Some have had recent bypass surgery, and one guy even works with a bottle of nitroglycerine pills on his desk."

Contributing to workplace tensions are the speedup techniques that the F.A.A. has introduced. Controllers are required to spend six hours out of every shift at their radar stations rather than four, as before the strike. The agency has also altered the way traffic is directed, especially at the en route centers, where airspace is divided into corridors called sectors. Before the strike, radar stations for each sector were usually manned by two controllers, one of whom watched the radar screen while the other operated the adjacent computer and kept in telephone communication with control towers and tracking stations. Now the norm is one controller per station, a practice known as "one holing." In another sharp departure from the past, controllers are frequently ordered to monitor more than one sector of airspace at a time, a practice known as "combining sectors." The controller monitoring the Wings West plane was working a combined sector.

The new work regime has traffic controllers like Skirlick incensed. "When you take away that second person, it means that one person has to do everything," he explains. "It's like playing in a one-man band." He says that on a busy day as much as 25 percent of the nation's air traffic can be found in Southern and Central California air corridors, which the L.A. En Route Center services. At any given moment, a controller might be responsible for directing more than twenty aircraft.

The problems of increased traffic, longer hours and staff shortages have renewed the debate about the safety of America's air traffic system. On one side of the debate is F.A.A. Administrator Donald Engen, a retired vice admiral and pilot in the U.S. Navy. "Right now, we're better off than we were before the strike," Engen told a nationwide TV audience on NBC's *Meet the Press* last December 16. Despite the conclusions of his own task force report, Engen denied that morale was a problem, saying that the agency had "done some magnificent things" to improve it, such as establishing "human relations committees" at air traffic facilities. He also claimed that near-midair collisions (collisions avoided by 500 feet or less) have steadily declined from the 1980 level of 586.

Exactly how great that decline has been, however, is a matter of controversy. By mid-December, the F.A.A. had reported 314 near-midair crashes for 1984, but the accuracy of that number has been challenged. Documents obtained in January under the Freedom of Information Act by Ralph Nader's Aviation Consumer Action Project indicate that the agency failed to report at least 102 near collisions in 1983 and 1984. The F.A.A. has conceded that its data may be erroneous, and, pending an internal audit, it has refused to announce final 1984 figures. For the first quarter of 1985, traditionally the time of year when air travel is at the lowest level, it reported 141 near misses.

Even more significant is the preliminary figure on "critical" near misses (collisions avoided by 100 feet or less) involving commercial airliners. That figure has jumped dramatically, from nineteen in 1980 to thirty-two in 1984. The final audit for last year may disclose an even higher tally.

Still another indicator of the system's sagging safety record is the increase in "operational errors," the term for a controller's failure to keep Instrumental Flight Rule (I.F.R.) aircraft—commercial and military planes—flying above 18,000 feet and separated by five horizontal miles and 2,000 vertical feet, as required by F.A.A. rules. Operational errors rose from 604 in 1980 to 1,885 in 1984.

Of special concern to controllers is the hazard posed by small private planes, which are generally permitted to fly at altitudes below 18,000 feet, without guidance from en route centers or control towers. The pilots of these craft follow visual flight rules (V.F.R.) derived from admiralty law and the ancient precept "See and avoid."

According to Skirlick, the congestion caused by V.F.R. planes "in some cases has gotten to the point where it is almost impossible to direct [I.F.R.] traffic." While the dilemma regarding small planes is longstanding, Skirlick believes it has worsened considerably since the strike. As he notes, the Rockwell plane involved in the Wings West crash was flying under V.F.R. Despite the problems, the F.A.A. has announced no plans to impose tougher rules.

The agency's stonewalling on safety and controller morale prompted an unusually strong rebuke from the House Public Works and Transportation Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, which has been holding hearings on the air traffic system for the past two years. In a joint statement issued last December 18, former subcommittee chair Elliott Levitas and ranking minority member Guy Molinari blasted Engen, declaring:

> The F.A.A. has been playing a game with the traveling public, but the stakes are too high to permit this to continue. We can only conclude that Administrator Engen has buried his head in the sand along with prior administrators in refusing to address this very real threat to the air traveling public.

A growing body of controllers, many of them old-timers who opposed the PATCO strike, are convinced that only a new union can solve the air traffic system's problems. "Without a union," says Joe Dalessio, a controller from Long Island, New York, "I'll be sitting by myself without any voice whatsoever. I'm not going to lay down and watch the government and the F.A.A. do whatever they would like without me having some sort of input."

Early in 1984, Dalessio helped found the American Air Traffic Controllers Council (AATCC) as an affiliate of the American Federation of Government Employees, the country's largest Federal sector union besides the postal workers. To date, the council has signed up enough controllers to submit certification petitions to the Federal Labor Relations Authority for more than sixty individual air traffic facilities and the entire Eastern and New England regions.

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Organized labor, still smarting from the PATCO massacre and Reagan's re-election landslide, strongly supports AATCC. The new union has been enthusiastically endorsed by A.F.L.-C.I.O. president Lane Kirkland and many other labor leaders. Until recently, the council also had the backing of the influential Air Line Pilots Association, which had refused to support the PATCO strike. On April 29, however, association president Henry Duffy announced plans to form a separate controllers' union, saying that AATCC's progress had been too slow and fragmented. It is too early to predict what the outcome of the rivalry between the two groups will be. The pilots' association, however, enjoys superior economic resources and may be in a better position to weather what promises to be a long and grueling nationwide campaign.

Stanley Aronowitz, who has written extensively on PATCO, is enthusiastic about the prospects for a new union. "I'm not surprised there's been an organizing drive so soon after PATCO," he says. "The prognostication of the death of labor has been premature. Technical workers like the air traffic controllers are precisely the ones who should be organizing in today's economy."

Aronowitz also disagrees with those on the left who regard the current controllers as strikebreakers and scabs. "Given the political climate in this country, you can't be too harsh or too critical," he says. "I don't view the controllers with suspicion at all. They got screwed, and it's just taken them three years to learn that they can't make deals with the bosses."

With air traffic expected to reach a record level this summer, AATCC organizers are calling on the F.A.A. to hire and train more controllers. "We're also insisting that no controller be required to work more than two consecutive hours at any given control position," says Kelly Candaele, who heads the council's campaign on the West Coast. "We're concerned, too, that controllers be given substantial input into resolving such questions as the definition and division of air traffic corridors and the adoption of new computer and radar technology." Although the council has taken no formal position on the rehiring of fired PATCO members, both Ralph Nader and Henry Duffy have urged the Reagan Administration to lift the blacklist, arguing that bringing back several thousand seasoned controllers would be the quickest and surest way to improve air safety.

Neither Reagan nor the F.A.A., however, has shown any sign of acceding to the new union's demands or softening their opposition to rehiring former PATCO members. Indeed, to cope with rising traffic, the agency is considering a variety of procedures to increase airport capacity by lowering traditional safety standards. Among them is an experimental program introduced in March at Los Angeles International Airport which has reduced the prescribed separation between commercial aircraft on their final approaches from three miles to two and a half miles. The agency is also reviewing an airline industry proposal to allow triple landings, by which two aircraft land simultaneously on parallel runways while a third lands on a diagonal strip crossing the other two.

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In the meantime, concern for air safety is mounting in the aftermath of the fiery crash of a dilapidated Galaxy Airlines turboprop on January 21 near Reno, with seventy-one persons aboard. Attributed to equipment failure, that accident suggests that the F.A.A., which oversees the inspection and servicing of commercial aircraft, has also allowed maintenance standards to slip.

Even if the controllers' organizing drive succeeds, however, the new union will face the strike ban, which will make it difficult to alter agency policies. But at the very least, the organizing campaign is lifting the labor movement's flagging spirits and calling attention to safety issues that the American public and the Reagan Administration cannot afford to ignore. □

In the West

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

municipal power over the years—Santa Monica, Pasadena, Culver City, Burbank—and had developed into respectable cities, more or less. But West Hollywood, like 77 other unincorporated swatches, remained under the loose and often negligent control of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

The absence of civic law produced a kind of civic lawlessness. A stretch of Sunset Boulevard in West Hollywood turned into a jungle of rowdy bars, garish stores and roadside eyesores known as the Sunset Strip: urban development as commercial metastasis. An anemic county rent control law sanctioned hefty annual increases, easy evictions, conversions of apartments to hotels and the immediate decontrol of vacant space. Even that lame legislation was due to expire this year, at which point the social and economic character of the community, not to mention the lives of most of its inhabitants, would have been drastically and irrevocably changed.

If municipal empowerment was an obvious answer to the urgent housing crisis in West Hollywood, it seemed just as appropriate a response to the chronic problems encountered by homosexuals in their long effort to create a haven and a sense of community. The County Supervisors, five men representing some 7.7 million people, were notoriously unsympathetic to the needs of the increasingly self-conscious gay and lesbian minority. Up north in San Francisco, gays had entered politics in a big way and had won political office, civil rights legislation, funds for specialized programs and services, protection by the police and, most important, a stake in the social discourse and a voice in public affairs. But down south it was quite the other way. Although West Hollywood is one of the most highly concentrated gay ghettos in the world (residents call it Boys Town, because the tokens of a young gay male culture are highly visible, but it is also full of lesbians and older homosexual men), lack of self-government had denied that community the rights and benefits now taken as virtual entitlements in other cities.

The irksome symbol of gay powerlessness was the sign that had hung for two decades over the bar in Barney's Beanery, a funky-hip chili spot at the trigger of the Hollywood revolver. "Fagots Stay Out" (the variant spelling was never normalized) was emblazoned on a wooden paddle over the bar and on the matchbooks given out to sniggering customers. There were protests, pickets and "zaps" against Barney's in the early days of the gay liberation movement, but the owner, Irwin Held, held out for what he called the humorous tradition the slogan served. To gays in the heart of the ghetto it was an outrageous affront: "our Guantánamo," a local resident once called it.

Disfranchisement had practical consequences as well. West Hollywood was divided between two state legislative districts, which diluted gay votes. "Watts isn't split; we are," David Mixner, a gay political consultant in West Hollywood, explained not long ago. "That's our fault. We let the process of apportionment go through without raising hell."

With no elected leaders or an effective bloc power, gays had little leverage on the large and small issues of politics, whether or not they were on a "gay agenda." There was no good way to bargain or browbeat the distant county and state officials into funding or approving a good AIDS program, rights for nonmarried couples, longer hours for the local swimming pool, restrictions on development or rent control. The answer was cityhood.

The West Hollywood Incorporation Committee, formed in the fall of 1983 at a meeting of seven persons (two of whom opposed cityhood), was the first step. It was called by Ron Stone, a former aide to Senator Mike Mansfield, who moved to the area in the 1970s. His migration was hardly unique. West Hollywood is journey's end for a wave of refugees from sexual tyranny as practiced in most parts of middle America.

Relatively few gays ever break out of the restrictions in their native surroundings and move to an urban gay ghetto, but those who make the trip usually have higher expectations and greater drive than those who stay at home. In West Hollywood, they are caught in a curious crunch of opportunity and frustration. There are openings for all in a tolerant sexual culture, and enough places to shop and brunch to last a lifetime. There are the typical ghetto jobs: taking in one another's dry cleaning, selling specialized goods and performing services. There must be a dozen dog-grooming boutiques, a score of gyms and innumerable card shops on a small strip of Santa Monica Boulevard. Gay waiters work in gay restaurants, gay doctors treat gay patients, gay lawyers counsel gay clients and gay accountants balance gay books. A few of the refugees, along with a handful of natives, make it to the top of the gay tree. The most prominent gay businessman, Sheldon Andelson, owns real estate, a restaurant and the local gay bank, and has a prized seat on the University of California Board of Regents.

There is a widespread impression that gays in their trendy refugee camps are rich and happy, but it is unsupported by analysis or even common sense. For one thing, the large lesbian community, which is virtually invisible to most

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tourists, is at the low end of the community's economic scale. But neither are gay men all economic princelings. West Hollywood is chock-a-block with aspiring actors, unused models and permanently peripheral people who work professionally only at getting a suntan. There can't be enough dog-grooming or table-waiting jobs to go around. Typically for ghetto-dwellers, what income gays do get is disposed on items that signify identity: clothes, home furnishings and entertainment. Gays don't have high family expenses (although there are many lesbian mothers and gay fathers), and they don't feel the compulsion to build an estate for inheritance. They often double up in apartments and share the rent. But the myth of gay treasure is a convenient excuse for those who claim to support gay rights but seek to deny gays social privilege. That's what gentlemen's agreements are all about.

The frustrations of the refugees grew out of the persistent denial of privilege, status and legitimacy in the face of the opportunities and conveniences of ghetto life. But if fifteen years of the gay liberation movement suggested any strategy for legitimization, it was the exercise of political power. Most homosexuals learned long ago that quiescence does not lead to acceptance by the heterosexual world. Even though the gays of West Hollywood do not resemble most militants in other ghettos, they intuit the same lessons of empowerment, organization and activism. The rent control issue set the stage for West Hollywood incorporation, but the historical process of gay liberation provided political actors and a concept for the drama that was to follow.

Making a political coalition, like making love, depends on chemistry, compromise and chance. At a propitious moment of demographic development as well as organizational evolution, the right people found the right conditions for creating a movement in West Hollywood.

Housing crises in many American cities produce paralysis and passivity, but in Los Angeles the crisis has galvanized renters. In Santa Monica, only a few miles oceanward from West Hollywood, the wretched of the rental class rose up in 1979 and passed a rent control law by referendum. "The People's Republic of Santa Monica" has had its ups and downs—although progressives continue to win seats on the City Council, a militant mayor was defeated and the landlord lobby is resourceful in its unceasing attempts to overturn rent control—but it has produced a remarkably consolidated reform movement.

The Santa Monica experience provided a particularly useful example for the Coalition for Economic Survival, a twelve-year-old community action group that works in low-income and minority neighborhoods in Los Angeles. C.E.S. helped lead the fight for a countywide rent control law in 1979 (the weak one, due to expire in 1985), and two years ago it tried to get a tough extension passed. That effort failed in the county as a whole, where less than half of the residents rent their dwellings. But in West Hollywood, the extension referendum passed by a vote of more than 5 to 1. Coalition director Larry Gross saw that electoral "defeat" as the political antecedent for the referendum campaign to

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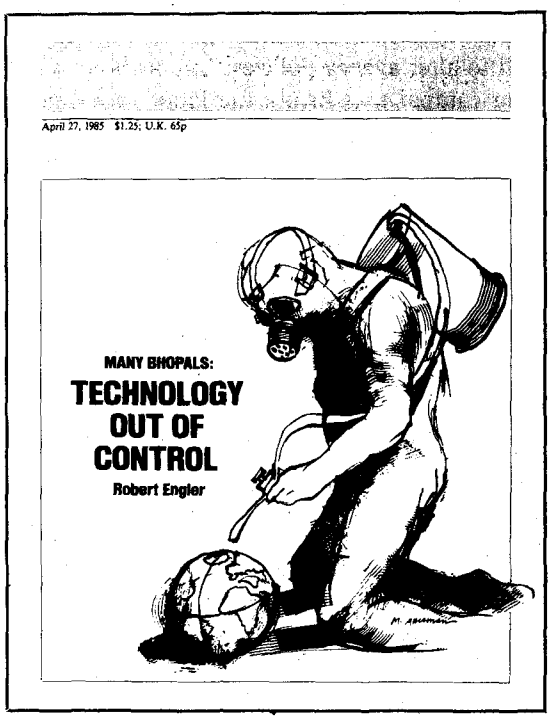

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achieve cityhood for West Hollywood. "If it were not for rent control, we couldn't have done it," he said.

C.E.S. is not just an office of organizers. It has a membership of some 8,000 Angelenos in the various neighborhoods it serves, including almost 2,000 in West Hollywood, which means there is a sizable contingent of gays along with the full range of racial, ethnic and gender flavors. Ideological tendencies run from liberal to radical. Its list interlocks with the membership of virtually every activist and progressive organization in the area, from the American Civil Liberties Union through the gay Democratic clubs to the Rainbow Coalition and then some.

The crucial interlock for West Hollywood was the combination of the coalition's political project with the homosexual base. Stone's West Hollywood Incorporation Committee needed seasoned organizers, and Gross's group was available. Before long, C.E.S. members were seated on the Incorporation Committee's board, and C.E.S. canvassers had collected signatures from more than the 25 percent of the 19,000 West Hollywood voters needed to get a cityhood referendum on last November's ballot. A West Hollywood City Council was to be elected at the same time the referendum was held and would immediately take office if cityhood passed. Forty candidates crowded the field from which five Council members would be chosen.

In the months before the vote, the theory and practice of coalition politics were thoroughly tested. There were splits within and among constituent groups, abrasive agendas, class antagonisms and personality conflicts. Most gay landlords and straights who did business with them felt sufficiently pressured by the rising "gay nationalism" to stay with the idea of cityhood, even if they opposed rent control. They expressed their opposition by backing anticontrol or "moderate" candidates.

"I must have got 150 pieces of direct mail from candidates," David Mixner recalls. "The doorbell didn't stop ringing." There was hoopla and horseplay: one candidate electioneered in a horse-drawn hay wagon down Santa Monica Boulevard. All told, the candidates spent more than $1 million. Sheldon Andelson's favorite, Scott Forbes, part owner of the popular Studio One disco, spent $66,000. Bill Larkin, a "moderate" on rent control like Forbes, spent the same. Valerie Terrigno, who had been president of the Stonewall Democratic Club, spent $44,000.

C.E.S. endorsed a slate of three straights and two gays, all of whom supported a strong rent control law. The Stonewall Club put forth an all-gay slate; the Harvey Milk Gay and Lesbian Democratic Club integrated its list, with a gay majority.

It took some time, but a landlord backlash developed, complete with antigay and antiradical themes. The Jewish Defense League leafleted "Jews and Gentiles of West Hollywood" to oppose the C.E.S. slate, suggesting that Larry Gross had spent the organization's funds to support Jesse Jackson. Another leaflet was more explicit: "THERE *IS* A JEWISH ISSUE! At least one CES candidate is an active member of the ACLU—the Nazis' supporters right to march [in Skokie] in the midst of a Jewish community!"

The real estate establishment opposing cityhood was represented by Banks Montgomery, a fifth-generation Angeleno who owns a sprawling development in the foothills above Sunset. His campaign flirted with antigay consciousness: the polling firm it hired asked residents whether they favored homosexuals "pouring" into the city, which would happen if it was incorporated. The gambit flopped.

The pro-city organizers, especially the C.E.S., made sure that the campaign addressed the needs as well as the fears of a broad spectrum of the community. "It was absolutely crucial that alliances be established at the beginning of the campaign," Larry Gross said. The political bonds transcended class lines, sexual divisions, age differentials. Renters shared their worries about development with small landlords: both are potential victims of conversions and commercialization as well as of rent inflation, which destroys stable tenancy patterns.

"It really happened," Gilda Haas, a C.E.S. member who now works for a representative on the Council, recalled happily. "Older Jewish women were working in the campaign office and ringing doorbells alongside young gay men. The thing that united them was that they were convinced they were working for their rights."

The opposition cast the housing issue as a matter of welfare. It agreed that the poor and the old might need help with the rent, but that was a question of landlord generosity and government assistance, not civic entitlement. In the same way, it cast the sexual issue as a matter of tolerance. It agreed that gays should not be discriminated against, but it did not admit that gays had a right to share power.

The cityhood campaign insisted that residents had a right to decent, affordable housing; that gays had a right to participate in the institutions that controlled their community; that, indeed, the struggle to secure these and other rights was what the political process was supposed to be about. It was a theme that informed the long referendum campaign, and it would infuse the debate and the politics of the new city government after Election Day.

West Hollywood voted overwhelmingly to incorporate. Five pro-rent-control candidates were elected to the City Council—four of them supported by C.E.S. Among them were two gay men and a lesbian, Valerie Terrigno, giving the body a gay majority. Terrigno led the field and became Mayor. Disco owner Scott Forbes came in twelfth, with 1893 votes for his $66,000. Ron Stone, who started it all, lost. John Heilman, a board member of the A.C.L.U., so despised by right-wing Jewish groups, won a seat.

"We knew what we were doing," Mixner said. "I voted for five gay candidates who were for rent control. Cityhood simply would not have happened without the overwhelming sense of self-determination by gays and lesbians in West Hollywood."

A thousand or more newly enfranchised citizens milled around the temporary City Hall in a small park on the east end of town when the Council met for the first time in late November. Hundreds who could not get into the session watched it through windows and on television screens set up

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outside. There were whoops of approval when Terrigno took office, when the Council voted an antidiscrimination ordinance, when it froze all rents inside city limits, when it ordered a moratorium on development, evictions, demolitions and conversions. There was a touch of Sandinismo in the air, along with the fragrance of night-flowering jasmine.

In the succeeding weeks the Council broadened citizens' rights. It began the difficult task of defining the families—"domestic partnerships"—that rarely enjoy the freedom and opportunities of the marrying kind. Not only gays live together in West Hollywood; senior citizens share lives as well as apartments. Mayor Terrigno wants to redefine "family" so that nonmarrieds have the same legal rights as marrieds: visiting a spouse in the hospital or prison, inheriting an estate, receiving city employment benefits, sharing insurance policies and signing a lease on a rented home.

At the same time, the Council members established a "comparable worth" pay policy which will rate city jobs on the basis of skill and experience required, difficulty of work and relative importance to the total operation, rather than according to gender or racial categories.

The Council also tackled a depressingly ironic problem of racial discrimination as practiced by some gay clubs and discos, which demand three or four pieces of identification for entrance from blacks or Hispanics, and only one (or none) from whites. Studio One was regarded as one of the worst offenders. The City Council outlawed the triple I.D. as a form of discrimination. The Council is trying to set an antiracist tone that will have a long-term effect on the city's conscience. Recently, State Assemblywoman Maxine Waters, a leading black activist who was one of Jesse Jackson's campaign chairs, addressed the Council about the South Africa corporate divestment campaign and advised it on maintaining an apartheid-free financial portfolio. Like all Council sessions, that one was also a public meeting, and a little like a rally.

The purpose of the new ordinances, the new terminologies and the mass meetings is not so much civic management as it is community-building. "We can establish democratic processes that don't exist elsewhere," Gilda Haas said:

> West Hollywood is so small, it's possible for lots of people to participate in setting goals, in planning, in deciding. We're inventing a city here. It's different from taking over a city, like Santa Monica. We have to work harder because there are no existing structures, but we don't have to clean up anybody's mess. And the opposition isn't so entrenched, either. If we want a comparable-worth system, we can start our city with it, we don't have to evaluate a whole personnel management program.

There's no way of knowing how far West Hollywood can go along its radical (by American standards) road to cityhood. The separate strains of the imaginative coalition that made the city happen are bound to diverge, although they may not come into direct conflict. But West Hollywood has already given the rest of the country important lessons about politics as well as government. It has shown that coalitions can be forged from unlikely sectors of the democratic rainbow and that they can be remarkably successful if common interests are identified and attended.

It has also proved that sexual politics are very much politics, despite arguments to the contrary served up historically by the left and recently by centrist Democrats. What now appears to be the Kennedy wing of the Democratic Party, represented by Democratic National Committee chair Paul Kirk, is busy dismantling the apparatus mandated by the convention last year to give weight and voice to gays and lesbians. On May 17, the committee voted to strip official recognition in party councils from homosexuals, as well as Asians and progressives. The theory is that homosexuals have nothing important to contribute to broad political campaigns and draw too much fire when they do participate. But that misreads the nature of Democratic politics, which demands a unity of disparate groups each seeking empowerment. The Democrats cannot deny a role to gays and seriously give one to women, blacks, workers or farmers. Any other Democratic strategy is either unwinnable or not worth winning.

Most media reports of the referendum campaign were patronizing or downright contemptuous. *The New York Times* ran a particularly snide article about the new "Gay Camelot," and let it go without analysis or critique.

But even if the policies of the new city of West Hollywood have gone unreported, the symbols have already produced a resounding crash. On January 15, Mayor Terrigno and Council member Alan Viterbi unscrewed the sign above the bar in Barney's Beanery that told "fagots" to stay out. It was only a varnished board, but it seemed like a whole fortress fell that day. □

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LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 658*)

successive U.S. Presidents have chosen their authoritarian ally rather than risk the degeneration of the revolution with its attendant bad effects on democracy. To put it another way, the chances of winning a revolution or reform struggle under the limitations of the Massing Doctrine are bleak.

The Massing Doctrine has an obvious international corollary which doesn't hold out much hope for democracy either. Presumably, rebels and dissidents in the other major sphere of influence, that of the Soviet Union, are to behave in an analogous manner. Had Solidarity, for example, offered its fealty to the Warsaw Pact, the corollary goes, the Good General would not have seen fit to use military force to suppress that movement. Unfortunately, the origin of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan indicates otherwise. There a perfectly sycophantic faction of the Afghan Communist Party was ousted by a Soviet military force and replaced with a more favored faction. International alignment had nothing to do with it. The actions of the Russians, like those of the U.S. government, are about social systems and control. The Massing Doctrine is a disaster for democracy East and West.

In fact, one wonders what Massing thinks a revolutionary democracy would look like. While seeking the "features of Western-style democracy," he offers us every kind of elitist idea. First there is the familiar notion that it is the middle class that demands democracy, as dubious in a Latin American context as it is elitist anywhere. Then there are Massing's choices for market-influenced models of democracy: Yugoslavia and China. The equation of the market with democracy is worthy of Milton Friedman. The great Latin American experiment with Friedman's version of that idea is, of course, Chile. (It is worth noting for the record that the forces fighting for democracy in Chile are based primarily in the trade union movement and not in the middle classes, much less among businessmen, whom Massing also sees as democrats.)

There is nothing wrong with criticizing a revolutionary leadership. The Sandinista leaders are no more above criticism than anyone else involved in politics here and abroad. But one has to wonder why such a chorus of sloppily put together hand wringing should arise at this time and over this particular revolution. The Nicaraguan revolution is almost unique in this century in the degree to which it has maintained an open and democratic political life. While most revolutions of national liberation in our time have rapidly moved in authoritarian directions to solve the same social contradictions the F.S.L.N. faces, the Nicaraguan revolution has tended to remain open and has kept pluralism a reality.

I am afraid that what we see in Michael Massing's article, and some of the responses to it, is not the rebirth of the critical spirit but yet another contingent in the dreary parade of tired leftists moving into the camp of liberalism. It's too bad. This sort of thing tends to give critical thinking a bad name.

Kim Moody

NOT A MASSIVE IMPROVEMENT

Washington

How good to hear a woman's voice in a *Nation* forum on foreign policy! And how insulting to hear it described as "screechy" in Michael Massing's response! This may be an improvement on "shrill," but would it have been too much for him to respond to what she said rather than how he imagined she said it?

Barbara Ehrenreich

MASSING REPLIES

New York City

Each week the labels mount. I've been called mushy, whiny, arrogant, self-serving, a Reaganite, a Friedmanite and, worst of all, a liberal. A doctrine is named after me. And, as if political deviationism isn't enough, I am accused of sexism. Having earned sufficient enmity on political grounds, I don't need the added ire of women, so I hereby apologize for my characterization of Holly Sklar's agitated remarks.

The letters that have appeared in *The Nation*—the cream of those received, I'm assured—often go to absurd lengths to avoid dealing with the real issues. Take Kim Moody. My piece discusses the need for revolutionary governments in the Caribbean Basin to reach some accommodation with the United States. In rebuttal, Moody prattles on about "revolutionary or democratic governments that are currently out of power." What a novel way to refer to guerrilla movements! My article explicitly deals with revolutionary governments *in* power; it's ridiculous to apply my comments to the conflicts in El Salvador or Guatemala. The Poland analogy, which implies I support Soviet domination of Poland, is similarly half-baked. The real implication of my argument is that should Solidarity somehow gain power in Poland, it would have to take account of Soviet might. A Walesa government decision to join NATO, for example, would surely bring Soviet tanks rumbling into Warsaw.

Moody also caricatures my discussion of the role of the middle class in revolutionary societies. I did not hold up Yugoslavia and China as models of democracy but cited them as instances in which the growth of entrepreneurship introduced tensions into socialist countries. In Nicaragua, rather than equate the market and democracy, I tried to describe the strains inherent in maintaining a private sector within a vanguard-party political system. Chile strikes me as a very different situation; it had no revolution and no vanguard party. In any case, I am hardly arguing that the middle class everywhere embodies democratic virtue; examples to the contrary abound throughout Latin America. In Nicaragua, too, middle-class agitation for democracy often serves cynical ends. Clearly, the maintenance of a mixed economy in a socialist state creates conflicts—a topic that deserves more serious consideration than throwaway references to Milton Friedman.

Much to my chagrin, I was not shown the letter from Mary K. Dowse before it appeared in the May 11 issue, so I would like to respond to it now. Dowse quotes Gandhi's remark that, while India would face the threat of civil war once the British left, at least it would be India's *own* civil war. The implication is that people who discuss events inside Nicaragua think just like colonialists. I find this silly and regret seeing Gandhi's admirable remark used so speciously.

Also in that issue, the letter from Eric Weaver included two paragraphs that I thought were being deleted. Again, I would like to respond. Weaver may be correct when he asserts that members of the Confederation of Labor Unity were evicted from their headquarters not by *turbas* but by C.U.S. dissidents; I stand corrected. But Weaver goes too far in denying that mobs were not active during the dispute. On August 25 of last year, *turbas* descended on a group of C.U.S. members, injuring several of them. I agree with Weaver that the Sandinistas have dealt with labor in a relatively moderate fashion and that the revolution as a whole has been an open one. Unfortunately, *turbas* do exist; they cannot simply be wished away.

That does not keep people like David Westerhold from trying. I'm not sure why *The Nation* chose to run his letter, because it rehashes what so many others have asserted—that progressives should become cheerleaders for the Nicaraguan revolution. His demand that we ignore differences within the leadership and sing its praises is worthy of a Sandinista press spokesman. Unfortunately, Westerhold seems to speak for a majority of *Nation* letter writers (not to mention Alexander Cockburn, as well as some of the magazine's editors and interns, who put me through a two-hour self-criticism session). I hope they all study Lucia Annunziata's crisp summary of the left's evolving debate about revolution, and heed her eloquent plea that American progressives look forward.

Michael Massing

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Gunsmoke and Voodoo

TERRENCE RAFFERTY

CAPTAIN MAXIMUS. *By Barry Hannah. Alfred A. Knopf. 101 pp. $11.95.*

The air of Barry Hannah's fiction is usually thick with the noise and smoke of gunplay, but in his new volume of stories only a single shot is fired and it's not a clean one—a double-barreled shotgun blast of whale dung, fired by a mean drifter on a Wind Surfer. This is a fully characteristic Hannah act, the sort of thing that might just as easily have been done by the students and crackers of *Geronimo Rex*, the Confederate soldiers and demon lovers of *Airships*, the mad doctors of *Ray* and *The Tennis Handsome*, those fabulously unconvincing characters who seem to reflect their creator's imagination simply by being wild, exuberant and proudly, aggressively full of it.

Captain Maximus, though—its 101 pages containing seven stories, a screen treatment and a few blanks—is too thin to be full of anything at all. Hannah may intend the shotgun episode, which occurs in a story called "It Spoke of Exactly the Things," as a kind of self-parody, a way of announcing that he's got all the *Moby Dick* crap out of his system. After all, the obsessive fisherman of this book's opening story, "Getting Ready," finds peace of mind after landing a small gray sand shark (which he throws back into the water). And even Maximus, whose story ("Ride, Fly, Penetrate, Loiter") begins with his account of being stabbed in the eye with his own fish knife, isn't, finally, a very alarming figure—just a benign biker/writer/teacher who has visions in his dead eye and who says, near the end, "At forty, I am at a certain peace." Statements like that could be taken as justification for the relatively subdued style and even for the very smallness of the book, as if the narrowing of ambition and the drastic reduction of means were marks of maturity, the midcareer writer burning off the fat—a justification obvious enough for us to be suspicious of it. Hannah's new modesty is so insistent that it begins to reveal, in spite of itself, a cunning side; he's found a way to disguise the anxious, wiry frame of an assassin as the athletic trim of a boxer training for a comeback.

Consider "Idaho," probably the plainest seven pages of fiction Hannah has ever published, a kind of tribute to the poet Richard Hugo, who died shortly after Hannah met him at the University of Montana. "I read his 'Letter' poems and saw what could be done with honest sentiment," the writer says, and this story seems to be Hannah's demonstration of what he can "do with" his own. The voice *sounds* honest, personal, but the sentiment comes out all wrong—as it has to, conceived purely as material for use. What Hannah does with his own feelings is what he does with all the elements of his fiction, historical or imagined: he transforms them into private myths. "These guys are, some of them, descendants of runaway Confederate troops from Arkansas and Texas," the first paragraph goes. "They didn't want any more of the war and rode, rode, straggled, gasped, into the Northwest Territory. Their tired horses and frightened families rested under the big sky, under the big mountains." He strikes this noble, elegiac note in half-ironic contrast to his own flight to Montana after a stormy term at the University of Alabama, and strikes it again a couple of pages later, capping his description of a visit to a writer friend with *this* honest sentiment: "McGuane is a giant in heart and body, and where are you giants anymore?" He hits it one last time at the end, as his reflections on Hugo, Stonewall Jackson, his Jimi Hendrix tapes and the theft of his gun collection converge in a sober midlife epiphany: "I look down at my hand. It's not a gun. It's only a pencil. I am not going anywhere." Johnny Reb lays down his weapon and goes back to his desk at last, the clipped, artless, Hemingway-like sentences testifying to the depth of his emotion.

If we feel uneasy at the conclusion of "Idaho," it's not because we've been blown away by its honesty, rocked by its self-revelatory force, but rather because we sense something furtive and crafty in it, another message, a coded, occult one that we were never meant to read: this "letter" story isn't really addressed to us, and it does not speak exactly of the things on Hannah's mind. "Idaho," for instance, is a strange title for a story about a Southerner in Montana who admits he never crossed the border into the other state, but only "bought an Idaho patch for my jacket and have ever since lied about seeing Idaho." What's unspoken is the name of Hemingway, who was in Ketchum when he put a shotgun to his head: does "Idaho" mean "Hemingway"? (Or "suicide"?) And is Hemingway, then, one of the "giants" who aren't around anymore (except in the imitative prose styles of writers like McGuane)?

Unspoken, too, is the question to which "I look down at my hand, etc." is the answer: it's "Hey Joe, where you goin' with that gun in your hand?" and it's the first line of Jimi Hendrix's first hit record. The reply in the Hendrix song is "I'm goin' down to shoot my old lady." Is this story not about a poet's natural death but about the narrator's veering back and forth between suicide and murder? Maybe it is and maybe it isn't. Once we discover that a writer's been burying little references, like land mines, beneath the surface of the story, we don't trust the terrain enough to see it whole, and anything is possible. Is it significant that Hannah, Hugo, Hemingway and Hendrix share an initial? If we played "Idaho" backward, at the wrong speed, and with the volume turned way up, would we hear a croaky voice telling us that someone's dead?

And "Idaho" is the best, most scrupulously crafted story in *Captain Maximus*. It's distressing to see Hannah's work become so cryptic and spare, as grudging of its revelations as his first novel, *Geronimo Rex*, was prodigal. This collection has the feel of those grim, creepy miscellanies that appear after an artist's death, like all the albums assembled from unearthed, marginal Hendrix material, full of vagrant riffs and aimless jams, fragments which serve only as eerie reminders of the stilled voice. A writer who represents himself in this way during his lifetime is either profoundly alienated from his own activity or simply exhausted—worn out from throwing too many punches in the early rounds.

Hannah has always been a jabbing, assaultive writer, the kind who wants to

Terrence Rafferty is a writer who lives in New York City.

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rip things open and see blood, and he's drawn to characters who embody that approach to experience: obsessive poets and musicians, careless doctors with quick needles and messy smocks, and warriors of every description (including cavalry officers, Indian chiefs, bomber pilots and athletes). The hero of *Geronimo Rex*, Harry Monroe, is, or imagines himself to be, most of those things in the course of the novel, and all of his roles are splendidly accommodated by the book's picaresque structure. Overstuffed with weirdness and careening from one slapstick skirmish to another, Harry Monroe's saga has an effortless and unselfconscious vitality: the pranks, the desperate wooing and even the stray bursts of gunfire are all just a young man's adventures, not a program for living, and even if the experiences themselves seem unfamiliar, a mite extreme, their youthful, giddy absurdity does not.

Most of the early stories collected in *Airships* have the same eccentric vivacity, but the shorter, more concentrated form makes the characters' individual quirks just a little more pointed: every oddball trait seems to carry a shade too much significance. And Hannah's language in these stories is different, too, with the kinds of jumps and distortions poets use when they want our attention, startling us with the unexpected word ("a crowd of the sorrowful and the inept had gathered") and clubbing us at the end of nearly every story—no matter how wispy its narrative, how random its details—with a blunt, decisive punch line ("I'm going to die from love," or "We were both crucified by the truth"). Even the most unassuming stories in *Airships* have a phrase or two that come at us out of nowhere, that mean to pierce us like the abrupt chords and keening isolated notes that break the surface of a Hendrix song, that mean, in their way, to wound us with the truth.

In *Airships*, as fine as much of it is, we can see something ominous happening to Barry Hannah, the beginnings of an almost mystical belief in his own easy manipulation of language—as if the exact combination of words and images will induce visions, like a prayer. This is a feeling that's probably more common in poets and musicians than in novelists—novels are too roomy, exploratory, approximate—and in the work he's published since *Airships*, Hannah is barely a novelist at all. *Ray*, the hallucinatory monologue of a Tuscaloosa doctor, is laid out in fragments of imagery and narrative and is completely successful in its own terms, but it's really no more than an intricate mosaic of phallic motifs—guns, swords, hypodermics, bombers, the thing itself. This short book is a kind of demented inspirational pamphlet, with doctor/pilot/poet Ray as its example of how to penetrate reality like a bright shaft of light: it's the esthetic of the short stories turned into an ethic. *Ray* pretty much embodies the complete system of Hannah's myths, honed and polished—and it's the sort of work that leaves a writer nowhere to go except farther inward, rearranging his private stock of images, elaborating them in different ways. For *The Tennis Handsome*, Hannah went right back to *Airships*, ripped out two unrelated stories and drew them out to novel length, adding a couple of new shoot-life-between-the-eyes metaphors (tennis and lightning) to the ones he already had. *The Tennis Handsome* is as crazy as *Geronimo Rex*, but less reckless; this picaresque is straining to transcend itself, and it's a joyless, panicked book.

The new fiction in *Captain Maximus* is a sort of vacation from the desperate exertions of Hannah's previous work, but it's a solitary, meditative one, filled with the memories of old obsessions—a weekend of fishing in the big two-hearted river. He's not charging around with guns and sabers, or trying to attach himself to the whale's back with the cord of an electric guitar; he's just still, holding his line and waiting, hoarding his secrets. His flying story here, "Even Greenland," is about the "damned triumph" of a pilot who crashes, flaming out, alone in the cockpit, with a single pure and personal image in his eyes: snow in Mississippi. And Hannah seems to be battling the invasion of a Northern chill: his "idea for film," "Power and Light," is set in Seattle (Hendrix's hometown) and has as its chief metaphor the elaborate and unnoticed network of power lines that warm and illuminate that gray city. Hannah has his own secret in this curious work, a private line that connects him to his vital sources, and it's Jimi Hendrix again: the screen treatment, peopled almost entirely with women, is an extended (and unacknowledged) riff on the title of Hendrix's third album, *Electric Ladyland*.

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Barry Hannah is an immensely gifted writer, but he should cut out the voodoo and try speaking to us again in the expansive, outgoing novelist's voice of *Geronimo Rex*. With each book, he's becoming less and less like the appealing Southern hell raiser Harry Monroe and more and more like the edgy, darting Union Army spy in the *Airships* story "Behold the Husband in His Perfect Agony," all his knowledge sealed inside as he glides quietly, vigilantly through the streets of Richmond—the spy who, in the end, whirls suddenly and kills what he most loves, fearing that it's betrayed him. □

A Confusion of Realms

*Philip Roth's three Nathan Zuckerman novels, plus an epilogue set in Prague, have now been issued in one volume (*Zuckerman Bound: A Trilogy and Epilogue. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 784 pp. $22.50). In the following interview with Ian Hamilton, Roth has his say about Zuckerman, with whom he has often been confused.*

IAN HAMILTON

Hamilton: I imagine you get annoyed when critics read this trilogy as straight confession. Zuckerman as Philip Roth. Yet sometimes it's hard not to read it this way.

Roth: It's very easy to read it this way. This is the easiest possible way to read. It makes it just like reading the evening paper. I only get annoyed because it isn't the evening paper that I've written. Shaw wrote to Henry James, "People don't want works of art from you, they want help." They also want confirmation of their beliefs, including their beliefs about you.

Hamilton: But surely the journalistic approach is inescapable—unless the reader forgets everything he knows or has read about you, Philip Roth.

Roth: If my books are so persuasive that they are utterly convinced, these readers, that I give them life red hot, untransformed, as it's lived, well, I suppose that's not the worst cross any novelist has had to bear. Better than their not believing me at all. The fashion now is to praise books you don't believe in: "This is really a great book—I don't believe in it at all." But I *want* belief, and I work to try to get it. If all these subtle readers can see in my work is my biography, then they are simply numb to fiction—numb to impersonation, to ventriloquism, to irony, numb to the thousand observations of human life on which a book is built, numb to all the delicate devices by which novels create the illusion of a reality more like the real than our own. End of lecture. Or shall we pursue this further?

Hamilton: Since you're enjoying it so, why not a little further? In *The Anatomy Lesson* there is the character Milton Appel, a distinguished and powerful literary critic. Reviewers have confidently identified him as Irving Howe. I won't ask you to confirm or deny this. I do think, though, that once the identification is made, it becomes hard for the reader not to pursue the biographical interest (i.e., Roth versus Howe) at the expense, sometimes, of the fictional clash between Zuckerman and Appel.

Roth: I wouldn't write a book to win a fight. I'd rather go fifteen rounds with Sonny Liston. At least it would be over in an hour and I could go to bed. But a book takes me two years, if I'm lucky. Eight hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, that's the only way I know how to do it. You have to sit alone in a room with only a tree out the window to talk to. You have to sit there churning out draft after draft of crap, waiting like a neglected baby for just one drop of mother's milk.

Anybody who did this to win a fight would have to be even more obsessive than I am. And angrier too. Milton Appel is not in this book because I was once demolished in print by Irving Howe. Appel is in this book because half of being a writer is being indignant. And being *right*. If you only knew how *right* we are. Show me a writer who isn't furious about being misrepresented, misread or unread, and who isn't sure he's right.

You can't. My trilogy is about the vocation of an American writer, who is a Jew to boot. If I left out the feuds and the paranoia and the brooding indignation, if I left out the fact that *they are wrong and we are right*, I would not be telling the whole unpretty truth about what goes on inside the heads of even Nobel Prize winners. I happen to know a couple of Nobel Prize winners. Move in very lofty circles, I do, and let me assure you, despite Their Great Contribution to Humanity, they are not so sweet and forgiving as you might expect. They too might not object if their critics were pelted with offal while being drawn down Fifth Avenue in cages.

Hamilton: Appel does come out of their argument rather well—better than Zuckerman, in fact. In their showdown telephone conversation one rather squirms for Zuckerman.

Roth: Of course you give the other guy the best lines. Otherwise it's a mug's game.

Hamilton: That old magnanimity.

Roth: Yes, my strong suit. Known for it. But it happens also to be a structural necessity. Tilting at yourself is *interesting*, a lot more interesting than winning. Let the vituperation flow and the mouth froth, but underestimate the opposition and you weaken the book. For me the work, the writing work, is transforming the I-madness into he-madness. Last point about Appel. Zuckerman's rage against Appel has less to do with Appel than with Z.'s physical condition. As if the willed self-absorption of the writer isn't imprisoning enough, there is the forced self-absorption in his chronic pain.

If it weren't for Zuckerman's physical pain, there'd be no Appel in this book. Zuckerman wouldn't have his harem of Florence Nightingales. Wouldn't decide at forty to become a doctor and bolt for Chicago, oozing Percodan at every pore. Forget Appel. This book is about physical pain and the havoc it wreaks on one's human credentials. If Zuckerman were in good fighting shape, why would he fight with his literary enemies on the Jewish magazine he calls *Foreskin*? He wouldn't bother.

Hamilton: But because the pain isn't diagnosed, because it's a mystery pain, we might tend to view it as symbolic pain, as pain visited upon him *by* the Appels, by the less than first-rate women, by the state of Zuckerman's career, and so on.

Roth: Symbolic pain? Could be for all I know. But in a real shoulder. What hurts is a real neck and shoulder. The

Ian Hamilton, a poet and critic, is the author of Robert Lowell: A Biography *(Random House).*

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trouble with pains is they don't feel symbolic, except maybe to critics.

Hamilton: What is your diagnosis?

Roth: I'm a writer, not a doctor. My diagnosis is that these things happen. When I was writing this book, I said to myself, "I want someone who has known chronic pain to be able to read this book and say, 'That's it, that's what it's like.'" I wanted to be as realistic and *un*symbolic as possible. Not knowing the source of one's pain doesn't make it symbolic: it just makes it hurt more. Not that it would be a comfort to Zuckerman if he knew, say, that he had cancer. Sometimes knowing is worse, sometimes not knowing is worse. My book is about not knowing. Look, diagnoses abound in this book. Everybody *else* knows. They've all got him pegged, just like Appel. All his women know what's wrong with him. Even the trichologist who treats his baldness knows why he's losing his hair: "undue pressure." This book is *crammed* with people who know what's wrong with Zuckerman. I leave the diagnosing to his comforters. I try to stay out of it.

Hamilton: Of course Zuckerman ends the book in an advanced state of metaphor, with his mouth wired shut by surgery.

Roth: He breaks his jaw falling on a tombstone in a Jewish cemetery, after overdosing on painkillers and booze. What's so metaphorical about that? Happens all the time.

Hamilton: But he's silenced, completely. He can't write because of his agonizing shoulder, and he can't speak because of his broken mouth.

Roth: Let me tell you a story. Back in 1957 I published, in *The New Yorker*, a short story called "Defender of the Faith." I was 24 and I was pretty excited about it. Then the story came out and it enraged a lot of Jewish readers of *The New Yorker*. Among the enraged was an eminent New York rabbi who wrote a letter of protest to the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai Brith—a very worthy organization, by the way, that's fought anti-Semitic discrimination in the U.S. courts for decades and keeps an eye on the anti-Semites so they don't get out of hand. They've been known to do that. Anyway, one line of the rabbi's letter I never forgot: "What is being done to silence this man?" Well, to their credit, they never tried it. Free country, the U.S.A., and nobody appreciates that better than the Jews. But I remembered that line. "What is being done to silence this man?" It came to me when I was writing this book, and that's why I broke Zuckerman's jaw. I did it for the rabbi.

Hamilton: So the charge of defamation started early on?

Roth: It started when I started. It has somewhat distinguished my career from most of my American colleagues'. I was taken to be an inflammatory fellow when I was still in my swaddling clothes. In its own strange way, the furor coming right at the start probably has given my writing a direction and emphasis it might not have had otherwise. It's difficult to ignore such assaults, particularly at 24. Back then I did two things: began to explain myself and began to defend myself.

Hamilton: How did you make your case?

Roth: I was invited to speak at synagogues and temples and Jewish community centers, and I went out and spoke. People stood up and shouted at me during the question periods. It was a good thing. I owe a lot to the opposition. They dragged me screaming out of the department of English. There were real people out there who got inflamed. They didn't write papers about what they read—they got mad. What a surprise.

Hamilton: So by the time you wrote *Portnoy's Complaint*, you already had an inflamed Jewish readership, so to speak?

Roth: I also had an appreciative Jewish readership. Even a few gentiles reading me, too. But as for my Jewish detractors, no, they wouldn't stop. They wouldn't let up, no matter what I wrote. So I thought finally, "Well, you want it, I'll give it to you." And out came Portnoy, apertures spurting.

Hamilton: What about your own family? How did they respond?

Roth: To the attacks on me? They were stunned. They were hurt. They heard a lot about my inadequacies from their hoity-toity neighbors. They would go to a lecture about me at their temple, expecting a star to be pinned on their boy just like back in grade school. Instead they'd hear from the platform that sleeping in my bedroom all those years, and eating with them at their table, was a self-hating anti-Semitic Jew. My mother had to hold my father down in his seat, he'd get so angry. No, they were all right. They recognized too many folks they knew to think such people as I'd described had never walked around New Jersey.

Hamilton: Your own father, then, isn't like Zuckerman's father, who on his deathbed curses his son for the books he writes?

Roth: I never said he was. You're confusing me with all those astute book reviewers who are sure that I am the only novelist in the history of literature who has never made anything up.

Hamilton: In each of these last two books, Zuckerman suffers a bereavement. In the second book, *Zuckerman Unbound*, his father dies calling him bastard. In *The Anatomy Lesson*, Zuckerman's mother dies, and Zuckerman is left with a piece of paper on which his mother has written the word "Holocaust."

Roth: Yes. She's dying of a brain tumor. Her neurologist comes to her hospital room to ascertain just how far gone she is and asks her to write her name for him on a piece of paper. This is in Miami Beach in 1970. She's a woman whose writings otherwise consist of recipes on index cards, knitting instructions, and thank-you notes. When the doctor puts the pen in her hand and asks her to write her name, instead of writing "Selma" she writes "Holocaust," perfectly spelled. The doctor can't throw it away and after her death he gives it to Zuckerman. Zuckerman can't throw it away either and carries it around in his wallet.

Hamilton: Why can't he throw it away?

Roth: Who can? Who has? Zuckerman isn't the only one who can't throw this word away and is carrying it with him all the time, whether he knows it or not. Without this word there would be no Nathan Zuckerman, not in Zuckerman's fix. No chiropodist father and his deathbed curse, no dentist brother with his ferocious chastisement. There'd of course be no Amy Bellette, the young woman in *The Ghost Writer* who he likes to think could have been Anne Frank. There'd be no Milton Appel with his moral ordinances and literary imperatives. And Zuckerman wouldn't be in his cage. If you take away that word—and with it the fact—none of these Zuckerman books would exist.

Hamilton: But you're not saying that your subject in these books has been the Holocaust?

Roth: No, no, of course not—certainly not in the way it's the subject at the center of Styron's novel *Sophie's*

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Choice. I think for a Jewish American writer there's not the same impetus, or, oddly, even the necessity that there is for a Christian American, like Styron, to take the Holocaust up so nakedly as a subject, to unleash upon it so much moral and philosophical speculation, so much harrowing, furious invention. It works through Jewish lives less visibly and in less spectacular ways. And that's the way I prefer to deal with it in fiction. For most reflective American Jews, I would think, it is simply there, hidden, submerged, emerging, disappearing, unforgotten. You don't make use of it—it makes use of you. It certainly makes use of Zuckerman. There is a certain thematic architecture to these three books that I hope will make itself felt when they're published in one volume. I don't mean that everyone is going to be knocked off his feet then by my conceptual grandeur. I just mean that the little piece of paper in Zuckerman's wallet might not seem quite so small. □

Freaks

JOHN SEABROOK

THE MAGIC KINGDOM. *By Stanley Elkin. Dutton. 317 pp. $16.95.*

Lydia Conscience, 11, pretends to be pregnant. In fact, she's got ovarian cancer—there's a forty-pound tumor aslosh in her womb—but better a slut than a terminal. Janet Order looks like a pretty child, but only in a black and white photograph. In fact, her skin is a dusky blue, dark as seawater, due to a hole in her boot-shaped heart. Benny Maxine's ailment, Gaucher's disease, causes sugar to accumulate in his cells, so he chews and sucks the sweetness from his flesh and nails. Little Tony Word has leukemia ("malignant cells buttering his marrow with contagion"); for Rena Morgan it's cystic fibrosis. Noah Cloth keeps losing his skeleton piece by piece to bone cancer. And Charles Mudd-Gaddis, a victim of progeria, premature senescence, is an 8-year-old dying of old age.

These seven spectacularly sick children are characters in Stanley Elkin's new novel, *The Magic Kingdom.* But "characters" may be misleading. They're more diseases personified than persons diseased. They're freaks and Elkin is their barker; to read is to wander a horror-show midway. You soon begin to question the barker's attitude toward his monsters. Is there compassion behind his spiel, some pity to dignify this spectacle? Here and there among his frantic, prodigal sentences the barker's voice betrays traces of sympathy, but mostly his purpose is to amaze and appall. Your curiosity is quickly sated. It's hard to endure this magic kingdom of

> broken imps and lurching oafs, felons of a nightmare blood, fallen pediatric angels, lemures, gorgons, cyclopes, Calibans, God's ugly, punished customers, his obscene and frail and lubberly, his gargoyle, flyblown hideosities and blemished, poky mutants . . . his human slums and eldritch seconds . . . his afflicted, delicate cachexies with their provisional, fragile makeshift tolerances.

Not even language like that can help you endure it, unless your appetite for perversity is far greater than mine.

There's so little life in *The Magic Kingdom* and so much disgust. Disease and death are not new themes for Elkin, but with *The Magic Kingdom* disease takes a new place in his fiction. In *The Franchiser* Ben Flesh's multiple sclerosis is the plot complication, the challenge to which the novel's wit, energy and compassion are the response. The life-affirming ending is dramatic and thoroughly earned. What little vitality *The Magic Kingdom* possesses seems mechanical in comparison. Even the language, the exotic diction and rhythm that are Elkin's signature, can't quicken this morbid kingdom for long. There's some comedy in the book's early scenes, which take place in England, but the humor quickly turns antic and then mirthless. It's as if "all the body's punch lines," which were to be vehicles of Elkin's irony, overwhelmed his comic resources and became his subject. Disease itself is his inhuman hero.

A few sentences from the novel help illustrate what I mean. One of the healthy characters, a doctor named Moorhead, is thinking about his career.

John Seabrook is a writer who lives in New York City.

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He remembers his early days as a physician, when "he was smitten by an ideal of health and life, some full-moon notion of the hale and hearty." Then he happened to see some photographs of the survivors of the Nazi death camps, and the obscenity of those living corpses forced a change in his vocation:

> He had to revise all his old theories. Disease, not health, was at the core of things; his idea of pith and gist and soul obsolete for him now, revised downward to flaw, nubbin, rift; incipient sickness the seed which sent forth its contaged shoots raging through the poisoned circuits of being.

That passage makes a pretty astute précis of *The Magic Kingdom*; unfortunately the novel suffers from the condition it describes. Pith becomes flaw; instead of soul there is rift. There's absence at the heart of the novel, where there ought to be significance. By absence I don't mean pessimism. Of course it's possible for a novelist to represent successfully a negative vision of life. Had such a vision been Elkin's intention, he could have made Moorhead his central character. That's been his method in the past, to develop one character—Dick Gibson, Ben Flesh, Ellerbee—within and around whom the novel coheres. *The Magic Kingdom* has no central intelligence. Nor does it mingle dynamically opposed points of view. It's like an allegory without the substratum of meaning. It neither affirms nor denies life. It exploits, rather than represents, the horror of physical corruption.

Moorhead's sad reverie comes in the fourth chapter, when the seven "goner spawn" and their guardians are on a flight from London to Disney World. The party includes Colin Bible, a nurse; Nedra Carp, a nanny; Mary Cottle, a chaperone of sorts; and Eddy Bale, who organized the expedition. Eddy is the bereaved father of Liam, who died at 12 of leukemia. Liam's death inspired Eddy to arrange a contest, a one-week "dream holiday" for seven of England's terminally ill children: Lydia Conscience and company are the winners.

Why Elkin chose to make his dramatis personae English isn't clear, except that he delights in British argot, words like "cagmag" and "codswallop," and needs an excuse for his characters to speak it. Elkin's ear is amazing. His own voice, however, is distinctly American in rhythm and idiom, and the trans-Atlantic hybrid is more disorienting than enriching. The narrative voice has more personality than the people whose story it narrates. Instead of establishing the characters it upstages them.

Why Elkin chose to set most of the novel in Disney World is more obvious: "because something of what they did here was always a *little* slanted toward death." The spook-house rides, the monuments to the past—Main Street, U.S.A.; Liberty Square; Frontierland. Geriatrics come to Florida to die. Tomorrowland is a kind of hereafter. "And how about those Seven Dwarfs? Yeah, how about them? Sneezy, Dopey, Grumpy, Happy, Sleepy, Bashful, and Doc. Cholers and pathologies. Wasn't there an analogue to be discovered between the dwarfs and these wise-guy kids?"

Plenty of analogues, but they're too heavy-handed to be entertaining and too random to have much point. Each is an episode: the kids go to the Haunted Mansion, where little old Mudd-Gaddis panics; they visit the Epcot Center to examine a future they won't live to experience; they watch the Disney characters parade past, a kingdom as cartoonish as their own. The tortoise-paced narrative creeps along. It halts periodically for long digressions into the sexual lives of the adults. Colin Bible thinks about his homosexuality; Nedra Carp remembers her incestuous longing for her half-brother; Mary Cottle masturbates. Gradually sex comes to preoccupy the children, too. Rena, cystic fibrosis, falls in love with Benny, Gaucher's disease. Her desire stimulates the "great dollops of black congestion" that clot her chest. She asks Benny to hold her. She dies wallowing in a puddle of mucus, killed by "the squalls, blasts, and aerodynamics of passion, all the high winds and gale-force bluster of love."

It's not exactly tender, this climactic scene, but it's about as upbeat as *The Magic Kingdom* gets. Love is Elkin's *deus ex machina*, his surprise which wrenches the novel away from despair. Or tries to. But it's hard to feel anything by this point, hope or pity or irony, so numbing is the catalogue of sick jokes. I only felt relief that the freak show was finally over. □

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THEATER.

PAUL BERMAN

Big River

Want to evoke the national character? Put on an abolitionist play. The first such play, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, was based on the novel by Harriet Beecher Stowe. It opened in New York in 1852 and did rather well. Road companies departed for all points. By 1880, long after the war it started had come to a satisfactory end, more than 400 of those road companies were performing Tom shows everywhere, except in the defeated provinces. Bands appeared, hounds trekked across ice floes, there were sometimes two Elizas and two Legrees. It was grand; never in the history of the American stage has anything been grander. Al Martin's Tom Show performed with eighty actors, a twenty-piece band, two drum and bugle corps, forty horses, eighteen chariots and fifteen bloodhounds. And it had a long run. The last old-fashioned Tom show was playing Los Angeles as late as the 1930s. There have also been at least eleven movie versions, including one by Carl Laemmle which used 5,000 actors and 10,000 artificial magnolias.

Today there are two abolitionist plays on Broadway. One is called *Small House of Uncle Thomas* and is a ballet segment of *The King and I*. The other is *Big River*, based on *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which Mark Twain wrote in Elmira, New York, where the local minister was Mrs. Stowe's brother, and in Hartford, Connecticut, where his next-door neighbor was Mrs. Stowe herself. The antislavery credentials of Mark Twain's novel are unquestionable, and for that reason people who have lately campaigned against its use in schools deserve the mountain of public correction they have received. A friend of the slaves can hardly be racist. On the other hand, abolitionism was a species of American

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liberalism, about which much can be said. The abolitionists entertained many curious doctrines. They recognized that slaves were fully human, had an immortal soul and therefore should be free. But did they regard blacks as equal to whites in other respects? Not necessarily. The notion arose that slaves were simple folk, congenitally stupid at a very deep level (unless white blood flowed in their veins), and perhaps for these reasons were morally *superior* to whites, who were too clever for their own good. By liberating the stupid but morally superior slaves, the whites would be liberating themselves. Hence all out for abolition. That is the doctrine in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and something very like it animates *Huckleberry Finn*.

Note the part about slaves and intellect. Now bring "Nigger Jim" onto the raft. Jim is fully human and deserves his freedom, and he has a moral character superior to any white person Huck runs into. But he is one dumb lout. He is a grown-up with a wife and kids yet he has the brain capacity of a 12-year-old. "Jim's friendship for Huck," Ralph Ellison wrote, "comes across as that of a boy for another boy rather than as the friendship of an adult for a junior." Think of those last scenes in which Tom Sawyer arranges a "romantical" escape from the shack at Phelps's farm. Wonderful scenes those are, hilarious, the funniest scenes I've ever read—but the humor casts poor Jim as nature's straight man. Does that make *Huckleberry Finn* less ardently antislavery, less incisive and vehement against the ideas and values that kept slavery alive? Not at all. Mark Twain was a good fellow. The stories that have been popping up recently about how he sent a black student to Yale and supported black causes are fully compatible with a book like *Huckleberry Finn*. He sympathized with blacks. He hated injustice. He was a sincere liberal, subsection nineteenth century. And those anti-*Finn*ians have a point.

Big River sticks pretty close to Mark Twain and lifts a lot of dialogue directly from the novel, which is nice; but it is a work of the present century. The musical's Jim is ignorant, as how could he not be, but there's no hint of terminal stupidity. The part is written with less wit but more dignity than Twain provided, and Ron Richardson, who plays the role, gives it a first-class Paul Robeson treatment. Seriousness

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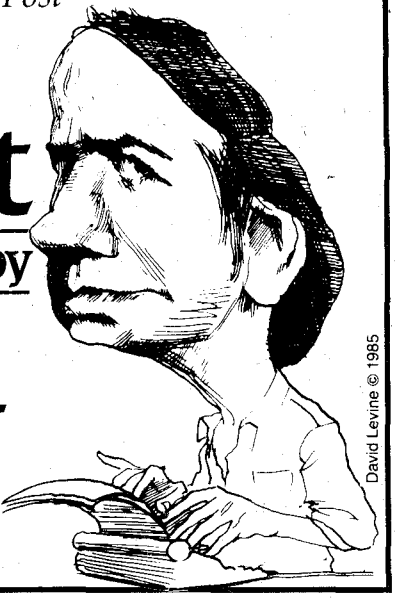

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characterizes the musical as a whole. Lionel Trilling, in his essay on *Huckleberry Finn*, described the novel as a profound study of morality and society. The profundity lies in Huck's meditations on whether he should help Jim escape. Every moral idea Huck knows has emphasized that abolition is evil and helping Jim run away is theft. Far from being impervious to these Sunday school ideas, Huck is tormented by them. He goes through a moral crisis, and the moral crisis engenders a physical crisis. Too riddled with doubt and guilt to watch the river, Huck misses the turn to Cairo and sends Miss Watson's slave drifting downstream to the Deep South. That was how Trilling read the novel, and that's how the playwright William Hauptman has done *Big River*. Twain isn't sentimentalized. You realize that Huck is Jim's best friend, but you wish that Jim had a best friend who didn't go through moral conniptions at helping a black man. Tom Sawyer also wants to help, but the aid and abetment he has in mind would take eighty years. Twain knew his America. And who would have expected to find *this* Twain, the shrewd observer, the complex moral commentator, on the musical stage? The result is one of the most intelligent musicals you're likely to see.

Most reviewers have, in a friendly way, looked down their noses at *Big River*—as usually happens when literature is set to music. A number have remarked somewhat ominously that the show is meant for children as well as adults. That's true, and the director, Des McAnuff, has I think kept this part of the audience too firmly in mind. No one floats downriver stark naked at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre. Rene Auberjonois and Bob Gunton make a rascally Duke and King, but less rascally than if there weren't a worry about offending the world's Miss Watsons and their wards. Mud keeps safely to the river bottom, along with Twain's hilarity, alas.

The reviewers have also noticed that *Big River*'s music is less than distinguished. Roger Miller, composer of "Dang Me," "King of the Road" and other classics, has filled *Big River* with country and gospel songs, each one less memorable than the last, except a novelty blues number in which Pap Finn denounces the "Guv'ment." At least there's no pretension in these songs. The glitter and flash which Broadway composers of the second rank use to conceal the emptiness of their ideas, the fake emotion, the overreaching for effects—in short the bill of goods which audiences receive in all but one or two of the current musical shows—are happily missing from Miller's *Big River* score, which may be bland but isn't false or show-offy. Besides, good music dominates a musical play, but do we want Twain's lines dominated? Let us interpret Miller's blandness as modesty.

Modesty is this production's principal virtue. Scenes show life at Hannibal, on Jackson's Island and on the raft, the immortal performances of the Duke and King, Mr. Wilkes's funeral, the escape at Phelps's farm. And none of these involve 6,000 dancing feet or pumped-up choruses beaming energy or revolving platforms or fancy lighting. Miller, Hauptman and McAnuff know a good story when they see one, and know to keep out of its way. Look down our noses at this? Please. Simplicity is a delight, not to mention a relief.

Among the other members of the cast, Daniel H. Jenkins brings a believable naïveté to Huck, and John Short is witty and wry as Tom Sawyer. Ron Richardson's Jim is sympathetic and big-voiced. John Goodman seems too young to play Pap Finn but he sure sings "Guv'ment" with conviction. Ralph Byers makes a funny Farmer Phelps. But the best thing in the play, after Hauptman's adaptation, are the sets by Heidi Landesman, beginning with the curtain, which displays a map of the Mississippi River. When the curtain goes up, a few scenes pass and you see the river itself, and this is quite a nifty thrill (which I won't describe so as not to ruin the effect). The sets manage to be just realistic enough to serve the story and just redolent enough of nineteenth-century illustrations to make clear that this is a dramatization of an old novel. These sets are not the most beautiful or well-constructed of any in recent plays—that honor belongs to *Biloxi Blues*—and they're not the most spectacular—that honor belongs to *Grind*, a truly frightful musical. But they're the most theatrical; they contribute the most to the purposes of the production, to the mood, to the sense that we are watching an authentic bit of traditional American entertainment in its effort to grapple with more than a bit of the national dilemma. Want to evoke the national character? these sets seem to ask. Put on an abolitionist play. □

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THE PEOPLE. Socialist biweekly covering major national/international developments. Since 1891. $4/one year, includes free pamphlet, "Capitalism and Unemployment." $1/four months. The People (N1), 914 Industrial Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94303.

TECHNOCRACY - TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIAL DESIGN available for $2 from Technocracy Inc., Continental Headquarters, Savannah, OH 44874.

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NOAM CHOMSKY—ISRAEL AND THE U.S., an analysis of the special relationship, 60-minute audio cassette. Send $8 to David Barsamian, 1612 Mapleton, Boulder, CO 80302.

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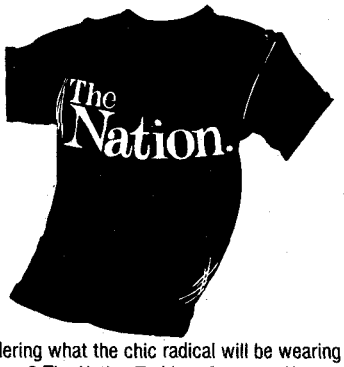

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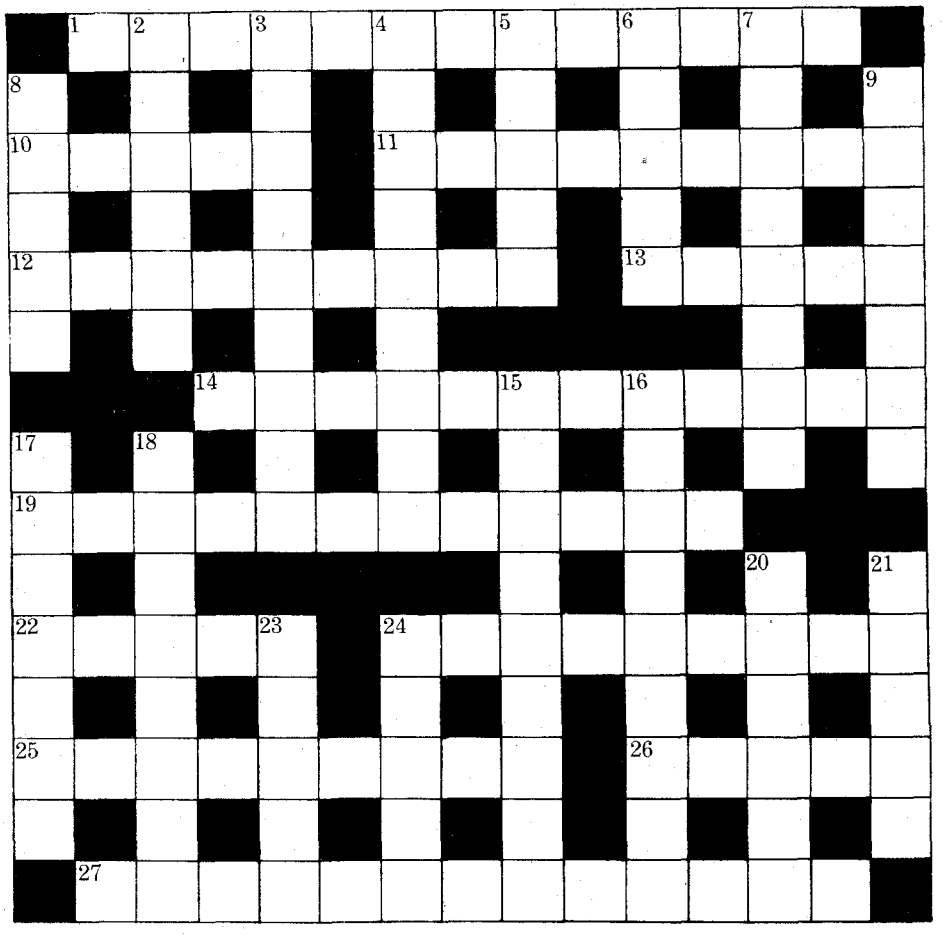

ACROSS

1 Was Adam—or was Eve—one? (They sometimes make allowances for such.) (5,8)
10 and 13 Meridian sign? (Not everyone dines al fresco, however.) (3,2,5)
11 Hornblower might not be the swanlike type. (9)
12 Implying one might forbid plenty in India. (9)
13 See 10
14 Mt. Ownan might describe one—knowing all the best places. (3,5,4)
19 Derby originator is comparatively angry with such an expression! (3,2,1,6)
22 Go back before the French eyes! (5)
24 A perfect picture of what Mehitabel said she had. (5,4)
25 You aren't, in case anybody asks you. (9)
26 A large number, commonly—not upright, in a certain case. (5)
27 Does one have to be one, to look for pearls in the soup, perhaps? (6,7)

DOWN

2 Was that of 1 across criminal? (That's how some vacationers spend their nights!) (6)
3 They sometimes go without proper fare. (9)
4 Rising versifiers take an oath about how to get a professional person. (9)
5 Played by a player in a play within a play, or just played. (5)
6 Plane wreck found in the Himalayas. (5)
7 Exerts no different type of muscle—acts rather as a stretcher. (8)
8 During WWII a man in a plane might have called this away! (Doesn't succeed on Broadway, obviously!) (5)
9 Possibly harps on subjects of a stormy old Gish picture. (7)
15 Obviously one doesn't fit in—but may ride the waves. (9)
16 The reasoning seems to be about nothing religious. (9)
17 Commercial places in Kansas? (7)
18 You might see an image here, with an effort, but you probably don't believe in it! (8)
20 A harangue made by one in business? (6)
21 Told by certain religious people to be good places to sleep around a string of them, perhaps. (5)
23 Assume a low position, and if you do it long enough you may acquire title. (5)
24 A way to cook eggs, as one might gather. (5)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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